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FINAL REPORT

EVALUATION OF THE RURAL WORKS PROJECT, PHASE I,
FOR USAID/AFGHANISTAN

A Report Prepared for the
Agency for International Development
under Contract No. AID/otr-C-1383, Work Order No. 14

306-51-995-131

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Development Alternatives, Inc.
1823 Jefferson Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

August 23, 1976

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Development Alternatives, Inc.

Final Report; Evaluation of the Rural Works Project, Phase I,
for USAID/Afghanistan

August 23, 1976

81 pages

4 appendices

AID Contract Number: AID/otr-C-1383, W.O. No. 14

AID Project Number: 306-51-995-131

Source: ARC AF 624 H625

The Rural Development Department (RDD) has moved from a fledgling organization to a viable and reputable rural works agency. It has initiated systematic attempts to implement integrated rural development programs in five pilot regions of the country. It has not accomplished its objectives both in rural works and in integrated rural development to the limit of its own capabilities, to the desires of the AID mission or to the intent of the original AID project designers. It is, however, a significant force for change and modernization. Beginning in April 1976 RDD expects to complete 70 rural works. These projects have been surveyed, designed, approved, and construction teams assigned to the field. With the assistance of USAID in the Rural Works Project Pilot Phase, design standards and construction specifications have been developed and in general adhered to. The evaluation contains: (1) a summary of project performance; (2) an assessment of the progress of AID support to the rural works component of RDD against the original intent of the project designers; (3) specific findings and recommendations on a large number of issues and assumptions; and (4) an approach to district development in Afghanistan. The evaluators recommend that AID support to the rural works component of RDD be continued.

PREFACE TO THE REVISED REPORT

The original draft of the evaluation of AID support to the Rural Works Component of Rural Development Department, Government of Afghanistan, was completed in late May 1976 and distributed to USAID/Kabul Mission personnel. Comments on the draft were of several kinds.

- First, it was not organized to provide an incentive to readers, being overly long and repetitious, with too much emphasis on matching performance against planned targets.
- Second, some of the background of RDD was not correctly understood.
- Third, occasional points were unfinished or unclear.

Our original intent was to provide a study which could serve as a basis for agreement on AID support to rural works within RDD, considering the relatively polarized dispute on the program we encountered in the early days of the evaluation. This accounts for the heavy concentration on the performance of RDD rural works to date and explains some of the organizational/readership problems.

Consensus on where RDD has come from (but not as yet where AID should assist it to go) has apparently been reached, and we are pleased to have had the opportunity to reorganize the report along more conventional lines. Due to travel schedules, this had to be accomplished when both Alan Roth and Donald Mickelwait, the principal authors, were out of the country.

Other DAI staff, following written instructions, undertook this task, but we apologize in advance for any problems caused by the inability of those most directly connected with the evaluation to read and improve the report in its final form.

The evaluation team believes the report was strengthened by comments from Mission personnel. Thus, while in some cases we merely made changes as suggested, in many instances we included these comments in footnotes, with a postscript where we believed one appropriate. Also, we have included general comments by Al Nehoda and Barnett Chessin as appendices -- offering the interested reader diverse and occasionally contrasting views on some of the difficult problems in the RDD programs. In addition we included a recommended approach to district development in Afghanistan as Appendix B, a conceptual overview written after the draft report was submitted.

Finally, this has been a thinking man's evaluation, one in which a simple indicator count against a logical framework obviously would not suffice. It was clearly an enjoyable assignment.

Donald R. Mickelwait

Washington, D.C.
August 10, 1976

I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of the Rural Works component of the Rural Development Department (RDD), Afghanistan was conducted between 26 April and 30 May 1976 by a team of three staff professionals from Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI). Not all the team members were present for the entire time. Dr. Donald R. Jackson departed Kabul on 16 May, and Donald R. Mickelwait did not arrive until 13 May, departing on the 26th. Dr. Alan Roth carried the brunt of the evaluation requirement and continued with the project from beginning to end.

The team originally believed that there was little difference between AID's support to RDD and RDD projects and programs. This was quickly proven invalid. Our responsibility was to assess AID's support to the rural works component of RDD. In doing this we, unfortunately, were not in a position to review all RDD programs and activities with the thoroughness they deserved. From hindsight, we would have preferred to undertake an evaluation of RDD for RDD, offering comments on AID support as they were applicable to the achievement of overall Department objectives. Working from RDD offices, we might have been able to identify and impart some significant insights on policies, priorities and operations. As it was, we were constrained to produce a report for USAID/Kabul which covered little more

than AID support to rural works and potential AID support to rural development in Afghanistan.

Upon arrival we found significant differences of opinion among AID staff over the accomplishments of RDD, their level of competence and the reasons for their effective or ineffective performance. In light of these unknowns, we established a methodology which drew heavily on tracing original intent of the project, recreating a detailed Logical Framework which contained the indicators and assumptions for INPUTS, OUTPUTS, PURPOSE and GOAL of the project, and we attempted to reconstruct the development hypotheses which linked the project's performance with AID's support. This occupied an inordinate amount of time, but uncovered a great many issues and much information which had not previously surfaced. The details of this investigation are presented in Appendix A of this report.

Comparing project performance against original intent of the AID designers is only one step along the way to evaluation performance. In this particular instance, the project compares unfavorably with its original AID intent. However, demands of the AID project approval system, as well as the enthusiasm of the original project designers, make this more attributable to in-house AID circumstances than to any serious defect on the part of the project. In short, we found the RDD a viable, increasingly competent rural works organization, with a good potential to bring benefits to rural Afghanistan for few of the reasons originally stated in the project justifica-

tion. We have attempted to step back from the details of the project, examine performance in light of things Afghan and render judgments based upon the best development philosophy available.

Section II is a detailed summary of project performance, relating RDD activities and then AID support first to rural works and in turn to integrated rural development. We have included under each functional heading recommendations for Phase II of the project. Three issues are then considered: (1) the development approach necessary to mobilize the local population in its own interest, in relation to the scarce resources available to the government to assist in the development process; (2) the Fixed Amount Reimbursement procedure in relation to the needs of the host country department being supported; and (3) AID's options for involvement in integrated rural development in the context of rural Afghanistan. Whenever appropriate we have included Mission comments on points raised in the draft report.

Section III sets forth our summary assessment of progress of AID support to the rural works component of RDD against the original intent of the project designers. Appendix A contains a mass of details on the project, and specific findings and recommendations on a large number of issues and assumptions relating to the project. Appendix B is a recommended approach to district development in Afghanistan.

We, of course, could not have completed our work without the active cooperation of the Mission and of RDD staff personnel.

Alan Roth
Donald Jackson
Donald Mickelwait

Drafted, Kabul, 30 May 1976; revised with Mission comments
10 August 1976, with the assistance of Mary Ann Riegelman.

II. SUMMARY PROJECT PERFORMANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

Supported by USAID/Kabul, the Rural Development Department has moved from a fledgling organization first chartered (in its most recent incarnation) in 1974 to a viable, firmly established and technically reputable rural works agency. It has also initiated, within the last months, systematic attempts to implement integrated rural development programs in five pilot regions of the country. That it has not accomplished its objectives both in rural works projects and in integrated rural development to the limit of its own capabilities, to the desires of the AID Mission or to the intent of the original AID project designers is clear. However, standing back from day-to-day difficulties, antiquated administrative procedures, inability to delegate authority, lack of intra- and inter-agency coordination (Afghan and foreign donor), the RDD is a significant force for change and modernization within the context of rural Afghanistan. There appears to be no alternative structure within the Government of Afghanistan which at this time can and will respond to requests for assistance from and deliver benefits to the rural poor. That RDD planning and implementation leaves much to be desired presents AID with an opportunity to help this agency become a more effective vehicle for development.

THE RURAL WORKS COMPONENT OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Introduction

RDD expects to complete 70 rural works during its fiscal (and calendar) year, beginning in April 1976. These projects have been surveyed, designed, approved, and construction teams assigned to the field. Construction will start when the weather, water levels and local participation are propitious.¹ Survey teams are now in the field selecting approximately three projects from six alternatives in each of 24 provinces, to allow actual design to take place during the winter months, with construction scheduled for the year beginning April 1977. The projects vary from small footbridges and irrigation system intakes, to far larger bridges, one spanning more than 150 feet. With the assistance of USAID in the Rural Works Project Pilot Phase, design standards and construction specifications have been developed and in general adhered to.² Proficiency in the

¹ RDD actually has 77 projects, bridges, water works, etc., approved, designed and ready to go. Because of the construction schedule, some will not be completed this year. The chief engineer expects 50 to be completed during the summer season, an additional 20 during the winter. In addition, RDD has designed three secondary roads for upgrading, and may start on these if AID funding (FAR) is approved. RDD expects to complete 300 kilometers of road without FAR assistance.

² Comment by Mr. Al Nehoda: "The validity of this statement insofar as it implies that AID involvement has had a significant or exclusive effect on design standards and construction specifications for all RDD projects is dubious. The UN has had a long involvement in the RDD Engineering Section with an Indian engineer assigned over a period of several years, beginning significantly before AID advisors arrived on the scene."

"A closer truth would be that AID has had a significant effect on designs and specifications on those projects it has supported directly. In almost

completion of rural works projects has been increasing as a result of foreign donor assistance and continued experience by RDD engineers and construction teams.

The unique feature of RDD is that theoretically, it is responding to local needs and cooperating with local villagers in construction which they have requested. Insofar as the design and construction are technically sound and the benefits widely distributed at reasonable cost, this aspect of RDD rural development certainly merits praise.

Selection Criteria

There have been significant changes in the selection criteria since RDD was first formed. More important than the criteria used in the initial months is the process now being implemented for selection of next year's (April 1977) construction.

Requests for rural works flow into the RDD office at the province level. They arrive directly from villagers, communities or groups of interested persons; from those same resources through the district officers to the Governor; and

every case AID had no input into designs or specifications before the fact. AID was not involved in any design or engineering training program which could have significantly improved RDD design capability across the board. AID merely red-penciled designs in an expeditious effort to bring them up to 'Pilot Project' and 'FAR' standards. This exercise in correction has probably had some minimum influence on key design personnel within RDD, who will seek the course of least resistance in producing designs acceptable to AID in the future. The prime movers, in this area, however, remain the UN personnel who are directly advising RDD on engineering matters."

This and following comments by Mr. Nehoda are based on his reading of the DAI draft report. See Appendix C for his overall views.

increasingly, from RDD village workers who have been outposted in three Rural Development provinces. In theory, and in practice in the well-run provinces, the RDD director and staff review all requests, visit the sites, eliminate those which do not meet reasonable standards for benefit incidence, combine those which are actually one project (as, for example, three requests along the same irrigation system) and send in a list with priorities to the RDD office in Kabul. In the well-managed RDD operation in Parwan Province, requests over the course of 12 months were estimated to total 100, visits and consolidation reduced the list to 70, and 30 were sent into RDD headquarters Kabul in groups of ten -- first, second and third priority.¹

Besides the selection of rural works for consideration by RDD/Kabul, the provincial RDD office has funds and manpower of its own to assign to locally selected and managed projects. These are essentially road and culvert construction jobs, utilizing World Food Program support. The Governor must approve these projects, many of which are scheduled for winter when larger water systems or bridges cannot be built, but when surplus and unoccupied labor is available.

¹ This is the model RDD is advocating, and it does work in some provinces -- those with capable governors and capable RDD directors. There are some losers of course. In these instances, requests from the villages flow into RDD Kabul with the RDD office in the province serving only as a conduit, neither reviewing the projects in the field, setting priorities, nor consolidating the requests.

RDD rarely receives enough information from the province offices regarding the specific project proposals so that it can decide in Kabul which six of the many proposals from each province should receive the attention of survey teams. When survey teams go out into the field, they first meet with the provincial RDD director and staff to select the six projects to be surveyed. The survey results are brought back to the RDD province office and to the governor's office for review of the survey and selection of three of the six projects for design and eventual implementation.

Among the criteria applied in project selection are strength of village enthusiasm, willingness of villagers to contribute labor and resources, geographical location, RDD capacity to undertake project, benefit incidence and preference of the governor.

The RDD/Kabul Planning Office expects to have more information provided next year from the RDD province offices regarding details of the proposals on the lists sent from the provinces. In this way the Planning Office will be able to select the six projects to be surveyed in each province before the survey teams go into the field.

The final approval on the three selected projects is given by RDD/Kabul. However, if the survey teams have returned with the detailed data necessary for design, "final approval" is close to a rubber stamp on the selection of the survey teams. RDD/

Kabul would need to insure that the personnel and equipment were available and that the projects were within RDD technical capacity.

The socioeconomic survey has been viewed by RDD as a pro-forma requirement to obtain AID/FAR funding.¹ The survey forms were not completed until after the projects had been approved by RDD. The surveys were done by USAID staff but in company with RDD staff who were picking up some skills by observation. In the revised procedure, the socioeconomic surveys (little more than intelligent guesses on the distribution of benefits from the project) are being conducted by RDD staff under the supervision of a USAID advisor.²

¹ This is not because RDD has no interest in benefit incidence. Rather it is because they believe their selection process will screen out those projects which are most obviously of narrow benefit to local elite. It also reflects, we suspect, their innate belief that the completion of the form was peripheral to a real understanding of the dynamics of the distribution of economic gains in rural villages. See p. A-71, ASSUMPTIONS FROM OUTPUT TO PURPOSE, on the state-of-the-art in socioeconomic surveys for an expanded discussion of this point.

² Comment by Al Nehoda: "This is very true for projects designed by RDD for construction through the summer of 1976. The type of surveys conducted in the past and presently conducted for summer 1976 projects have little or no information value in terms of benefit incidence. They are USAID file documents which hint in only the most general of terms as to the merits of a specific project. They are a device of last resort and a weak and ineffectual attempt to meet the demands of the U.S. Congress that foreign assistance funds benefit the "rural poor." Whereas USAID has begun to recognize the absurdity of the present form of socioeconomic survey, it has planted a "bad seed" by institutionalizing the present type of survey within RDD. It is clear that USAID will revise its requirements vis-a-vis the SE survey to produce less costly and more plausible results. Unfortunately, RDD in its efforts to stride ahead is using the present SE survey format in justifying construction for the winter and summer of 1977. Groups of engineers and others who have not been trained in the use of the present forms are busily collecting useless data to submit with future requests for FAR funding. They

Design and Construction

We are not qualified to make technical judgments on either the design of rural works or construction of the projects. Those who should know say the capabilities of RDD are significantly better than during the Pilot Phase, and improving. How much of the improvement is due to the addition of both UN and German volunteer engineers directly into the RDD structure, the more stringent standards of the FAR system, or simply more experience among RDD design and construction teams is conjecture. Were there some kind of systematic follow-up on completed projects, both from a benefit as well as a design and construction viewpoint, some hard data might be acquired which could help answer these questions.

Plan
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Since only 30 percent of the total RDD projects are under AID's scrutiny, the majority are the clear responsibility of RDD. There are then two prime considerations in evaluating RDD technical capabilities. First, will completed structures (bridge, water intake, etc.) do what they were designed to do, for a reasonable period of time? Second, was the most cost-effective design and construction procedure used? We have the impression that most of the assistance given to RDD has been to

are preparing now for the future to placate USAID with surveys that are hopelessly useless.

"It is clear to me that RDD has never used the USAID style socioeconomic survey in deciding which projects to construct nor will they use it in the future. What remains to be seen is how RDD will react when it presents the now out-moded surveys to USAID and is spurned for its efforts."

insure the first requirement -- that the bridges would, in fact, carry the loads estimated, that the water intakes would not wash out in the spring floods. The refinements which offer a set of options for design and construction, and specify a procedure which selects the "best" alternative probably must await further development of the human resources base at RDD.

As with the rest of RDD, organization for design and construction has been rapidly improving. In its first years the same engineers surveyed the sites, designed the structures and supervised the construction. At the moment there are sufficient engineers (23 Afghans to allow 16 construction teams working in 16 provinces).¹ Each team should have at least one engineer and four technicians who are construction supervisors.² In addition, there are skilled laborers, mechanics, etc. Each team will begin at least four projects, and one supervisor will remain at each site with continuing responsibility for the construction. The engineer will rotate throughout the sites. As the projects are small and finished quickly, additional projects which have already been designed and approved will be initiated. All construction to be undertaken during the summer

¹ We are dealing with averages and tendencies. RDD assumes that the UN and German volunteer engineers are also a part of their staff, and some provinces have more than four construction supervisors. In Ghazni, for example, there are a number of small projects in close proximity and sufficient personnel to start seven or eight projects simultaneously. We prefer to call this "one" team even though purists might prefer to see it as two, with a total of 17 for RDD.

² Two provinces, Samagan and Balkh, have only three technicians. All other provinces (14) have four or more, as well as one engineer.

construction season now underway has an assigned team, as well as an assigned construction supervisor, with a schedule for trucks to carry equipment, supplies, etc. Within the context of management capability generally accorded to most Afghanistan government organizations, RDD, with AID and other foreign donor assistance, for all its problems, has the start of an adequate planning and implementation capacity for Rural Works.

RDD has plans to split the survey, design and construction responsibilities, and to do so along the lines of a public works department (i.e., roads and bridges in one category and irrigation systems in another). This division of labor will be enhanced by the addition to the RDD staff of 60 twelfth-grade graduates who will be given four months of training in specific skills to fill positions as assistant technicians. With a division of labor, the overall skill requirements of any one staff member will be reduced while the opportunity for staff members to perfect a specific skill will be increased.

Capacity for Expansion

Rapid expansion of the number of rural works to be completed by RDD in any one year will depend upon significant increases in the skilled manpower base. Their 23 line Afghan engineers are complemented by three on contract who are just finishing engineering school, four UN engineers, three German volunteer engineers (with an additional man on the way) and contract

design assistance provided by CECSAR.¹ With this level of capability, RDD has grown from an organization which could field ten construction teams in 1975, to 16 in 1976, with 19 programmed in 1977. Engineers and equipment remain the limiting factors.²

In 1975 RDD requested 11 engineers from the ministry which makes manpower allocations, and received two. Four were received the year before. RDD estimates that it takes two years for the new engineers to be able to work independently, without foreign or experienced Afghan engineer supervision. Equipment is also important, particularly to move teams and to move materials (cement, iron bars, local sand, stones and gravel) to the sites. With more transportation, cement mixers, etc., construction could progress more rapidly. RDD has not requested large earth-moving equipment.

The other factor which significantly affects construction times is the willingness and availability of local labor. From the engineer's point of view, paid labor decreases construction time. This is one reason why RDD likes the FAR arrangements --

¹ A consultant group composed of Faculty of Engineering staff from Kabul University, CECSAR will be designing minor irrigation systems that are targeted for FAR funding. The United Nations is planning a substantial increase in its technical assistance to RDD (see pp. A-92-93).

² This is not to say that management and decisionmaking is not, and will not continue to be a serious problem. However, to complement the work of AID's technical assistance, the UNDP Team Leader at RDD, Mr. Glaister, is acknowledged to be forceful, competent, ever present on the scene and exerting a powerful influence on the organization of the rural works portion of RDD.

money is available to pay for labor on the site, as well as labor in acquiring and moving local materials. More labor payments would mean more projects completed.¹

RDD does not project any significant increase in project starts next year, over this current year. This year's total may be over 70; next year, the total is projected at approximately 75. Assuming a maximum (upper bound) 33 percent increase in the capacity to do rural works each year, beginning in 1977, RDD in 1980 would be able to complete 220 structures of average size. It might, in addition, be able to complete a good many kilometers of secondary road, but this is difficult to estimate since RDD has little experience in building roads to AID standards. It will require some time before RDD is able to organize major road construction projects.

This target does not include construction of roads and installation of culverts that are undertaken by local RDD province staff without RDD/Kabul design and supervisory support. Road construction requires a heavy local labor input but little in the way of equipment and technical supervision. This year such road construction will total about 300 kilometers. These are tertiary roads which may link as many as ten villages to a market town. If construction specifications were to be improved to meet AID standards for FAR funding, some design training would be needed.

¹ There are, we hope, considerations other than the number of projects finished by RDD. See the following section on Development Approach for an analysis of the costs and benefits of paid labor.

The Impact of Rural Works on Development

An evaluation of the potential impact of rural works on the development of Afghanistan must be based upon a set of hypotheses about the correct road to development, rather than on which documents development in progress. There is no "proof" of the benefits of rural works on agricultural production, modernization or income/quality of life of small farmers in rural Afghanistan. This information has not been collected and cannot be collected without inordinate effort and cost. The majority of assumptions of the original project directly linking rural works to agricultural modernization have been shown to be unfounded. It is also noteworthy that on some projects, particularly water systems, RDD with USAID assistance is paying for local labor which has traditionally been donated. This is not judged to be conducive to the mobilization of local resources necessary for developmental change, and recommendations for new procedures are contained in the following pages.

The hypotheses (development approaches) which call for a positive evaluation of the rural works portions of RDD are as follows:

- A government which historically has had little positive interchange with its rural population, can set in motion the process of development (the required interface between local needs and resources and outside technology and resources) through a program of responses to locally generated requests for rural works.

- In a country where cultivable land is severely constrained by water shortages, improvements to small-scale water systems are a necessary precursor to the modernization of agricultural production.
- When fragmentation and isolation are key constraints to the integration of rural societies into broader social and economic patterns (regional and national), the construction of access roads and bridges is a necessary step in the process of modernization.

The evaluation teams assessed RDD as providing services (rural works) which have a positive impact on development in rural Afghanistan at reasonable cost. Considering that many previous development projects have not been successful, some at very high cost, the rural works component of RDD should be nurtured and assisted, particularly as it can serve as an input to an integrated rural development program. The process of starting slowly and building from past success, even though the rural works program will not have nationwide coverage, appears sound in a country with few proven good ideas which generate developmental change.

AID Support to the Rural Works Component of the Rural Development Department

AID support to the rural works component of RDD is composed of two elements:

- Standardization of design and construction procedures and the improvement of technical capabilities -- all to be accomplished by the use of the Fixed Amount Reimbursement (FAR) method of payment. This procedure has shown mixed results and is examined in detail in the ISSUES section which follows; and

- Technical assistance in socioeconomic analysis, policies, priorities, planning and management of RDD operations. This will be examined in some detail.¹

In the early days of RDD, AID provided the technical assistance which set policies, formalized the organization and established many of the operating procedures.² The funding of the Pilot Phase, establishment of standards for design and construction, and the continual presence of as many as three full time

¹ The evaluation team came to Kabul under the impression that, since RDD was a product of AID, there would be no fundamental difference between USAID support to RDD and RDD's own programs and policies. This confusion is even reflected in the scope of work. Upon arrival, it soon became clear that the evaluation was to cover principally USAID's support to RDD, which is a more restricted subject.

² Comment by Al Nehoda: "RDD has been functioning as an institution for well over 20 years. Direct and permanent USAID involvement did not begin at RDD until 1972. USAID probably had very little input on over-all RDD policies, organization, and procedures. The organization of RDD is typical of most organizations within the Afghan bureaucracy. The organizational chart of RDD is tailored to the Afghan mode and would match directorate for directorate and section for section the organization charts of most other GCA agencies.

"RDD policies are set in the charter of 1972, which represents an almost verbatim retrogression to the earlier RDD charter of 20 years ago. AID, through the offices of its former advisors, had minimal and soft impact on RDD agency-wide policies. To 'pick and choose' four projects during the Pilot Program does not represent impact on policy.

"For AID to select for FAR from among an RDD pre-selected group of projects does not represent an impact on RDD policy. It only reflects implementation of AID policy. AID has had no impact on RDD's initial and basic selection of projects.

"Among the policy goals stated in the PP, is one concerning the payment of unskilled labor on RDD projects. To date no clear policy has been promulgated. To wit, AID has not set (nor should it set) RDD policy. It has neither the leverage nor the skill to deal in such sensitive areas. AID should formulate its own policies vis-a-vis its contribution to RDD in such a way as to prevent a superficial, overlay of AID policy on the RDD bureaucracy.

"RDD did not begin with the dedication of the first USAID FAR project,

Induly
+
classmate
memo
2/10
2/10
2/10

advisors at RDD headquarters gave the USAID mission a commanding presence. In the early days of AID involvement in RDD (beginning in 1972), AID provided the guidance.¹

There was a general shift of AID personnel supporting RDD at the beginning of the summer of 1975 and extending through the early months of 1976. Reacting to the new role that AID would assume in an ongoing, rather than a fledgling organization, this new advisory staff has taken residence in USAID offices, a natural response to the continual demands of the bureaucracy -- submitting reports, responding to requests for information, assisting the process of surveys, designs, approvals and eventual funding under FAR. This action has significantly reduced the presence of AID's technical advisors at RDD headquarters, and is one factor which reduced the influence of AID over the direction of RDD programs.

At the same time that AID was retrenching from its day-to-day involvement in RDD affairs, two other donors increased

nor will it cease to exist without further USAID support."

DAI response: It appeared to us, as outsiders, that three energetic U.S. advisors had a major role in re-invigorating and energizing the rural works component of RDD and for its rebirth in 1972. We could be incorrect, of course, but the path of U.S. influence and support appeared to us downhill beginning in mid-1975.

1 Comment by Al Nehoda: "Basic guidance to the program precurses AID
and UN assistance. The UN has provided and is providing more basic guidance
than AID. A full time UN advisor was on the scene at RDD long before AID
entered the development scene.

Conc. Neg. 1
Positive 2
Exposure 3

advisory services in the RDD complex.¹ The UNDP provided the services of George Glaister, an Englishman who, as a fellow engineer, has gained President Sediq's ear. With his own strengths and initiative, the assistance of three other UN engineers and a proposal for a five million dollar assistance package, he seems to have taken the lead in setting new policies and directions for the rural works portion of RDD. A bilateral Indian team has been in residence in RDD offices for 14 months, with the team leader providing community development advice to RDD, and a training specialist developing an extended training course for village workers.

If a part of the technical assistance program is to develop meaningful collaboration, then close personal relationships become very important. In recommending that an engineer should

¹ Comment by Al Nehoda: "This implies that AID was previously involved in day-to-day RDD affairs, which was certainly not the case. The previous AID advisors were present at RDD 'from day-to-day' in an attempt to establish the FAR program. They were not institution building per se, but were attempting to pry open a crack through which AID funds could be introduced in a program to help the rural poor. That program has been introduced and requires a considerable amount of administrative." 1.

"The UN and Indian teams on the other hand are involved in institution building. The USAID team is primarily involved in bridge, road, and irrigation structure building.

"At such a time that USAID has determined its own policy with respect to the details of the FAR program and/or institution building, its advisors will be able to address RDD and RDD's problems with a semblance of confidence.

"Imagine RDD's consternation at the sight of 11 foreign advisors, each with distinctly individual approaches toward development, forming three agency groups with larger development goals, stumbling over each other to present to RDD the single right solution to all its problems."

DAI response: We agree in all aspects except magnitude with the above comment. To our view there has been a significant difference between present and past USAID involvement in what we agree is peripheral institution building.

be posted full-time with RDD, David Garner, a previous AID advisor, wrote in his final report:

"When this man is in Kabul, he must be willing and able to spend almost all of his working time in the RDD offices, drinking tea if necessary until he gets to know the people and the strengths and weaknesses of the Department so that his engineering recommendations will be most useful, both for RDD and for USAID."¹

Such a recommendation obviously extends to policy and program technical assistance as well.

We expect that RDD leadership sees in the USAID technical staff a responsibility for conducting and administering the FAR program, as distinct from directly assisting RDD. FAR itself has little management, policy or priority function. As the USAID staff concentrates more on making FAR work successfully, they will become further removed from many of what RDD sees as the most important questions. In addition, RDD is not happy with the delays and constraints imposed in the FAR procedures as they have operated in the past, and this cannot but make the role of the USAID staff even more difficult when dealing with RDD leadership.

There is no reason to believe that this lack of input into top level RDD policy, or the absence of a "commanding" AID involvement in RDD operations by USAID staff has been detrimental

¹ Garner, Final Recommendations, January 7, 1976, p. 3.

to RDD's performance. RDD, now under full steam after a good deal of stumbling in early years, has a momentum and direction of its own; AID has accepted a supporting role; RDD's own budget is over \$1,000,000 per year, with more said to be available if that is exhausted. It has excellent in-house foreign donor advisors, at least some of whom RDD sees as members of their own staff. AID is presently supporting approximately 30 percent of RDD's projects, covering 75 percent of estimated project cost. In the absence of AID/FAR support, RDD, as has been regularly demonstrated, will build its own rural works. If the goal of an AID program is to create an increasingly strengthened host country organization which is not dependent upon AID technical assistance funding, then in a short space of time the RDD program has moved a long way in that direction.

OVERALL RURAL WORKS RECOMMENDATION

The evaluation team believes AID support to the rural works component of RDD should be continued. RDD is becoming increasingly well organized and competent and is responding in most instances to village requests for needed assistance. This helps to set in motion the process of development by improving access to remote and isolated villages and increasing water availability in a land of perpetual water shortages. It is one necessary ingredient on the long and, as demonstrated in Afghanistan, extremely difficult path toward modernization.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE AID INVOLVEMENT
IN SOCIOECONOMIC SURVEYS,
AND ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECT SELECTION**

Along the lines of the detailed analysis of USAID/RDD socio-economic surveys on pages A-20-25, DAI recommends:

- The socioeconomic surveys should be scheduled to closely follow the preliminary RDD site visits. RDD is sending preliminary survey teams to six sites in each province one year before the construction is due to begin. These survey teams gather enough information to allow RDD to choose three of the six sites. The socioeconomic survey teams should undertake their surveys in the three selected sites of each province soon after the preliminary survey and before the design work begins.
- Brief one-day surveys should be conducted for bridge and water control structures and extensive surveys built into an information system¹ should be used for minor irrigation system projects and rural development projects.
- The criterion for selection of bridges that are within the territory of a village and specifically benefit the people of the village should be the willingness of the local people to volunteer their labor to construct the bridge. This will help assure that the project will not benefit just a few local people or households. Such a bridge should use only voluntary labor for all unskilled labor needs.
- For bridges that fall outside the territory of a village and are built to benefit many villages without any one village clearly perceiving it as their bridge, the criterion for selection should be the number of villages that will benefit from the bridge. Such a bridge need not use voluntary labor for its unskilled labor needs.

¹ For a description of DAI research on information systems, see footnote, p. A-72.

- It will be necessary to continue on-site checks to see that requests from groups of villagers for projects that are under consideration as FAR projects will benefit small farmers and not just a Malik or large land-owner who may have generated the request.
- Flexibility must be allowed for road and bridge projects that are judged by RDD/USAID as a priority need for a village or group of villages but were not initiated in response to requests from these villages. These projects should not be forced upon the people. If the farmers do not accept the project and remain unwilling to give up the necessary land for construction, the project should not be FAR-funded.
- Projects that have clearly identified beneficiaries who themselves can immediately appreciate the benefits (this would include all water control projects and some bridges projects) should be initiated only in response to requests from the local beneficiaries.

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| <p>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE AID INVOLVEMENT IN CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS</p> |
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- Future assistance programs should minimize dependence on highly skilled Afghan specialists and maximize use of those with a high school diploma and less. Paraprofessional manpower development should receive attention.
- USAID should provide (or see that other donor assistance provides) RDD with a technical advisor to develop training curriculum for people with non-technical backgrounds in fundamental, narrowly defined technical skills. This should be coordinated with UN technical assistance to RDD.
- A local engineer should be hired by USAID and given special training to qualify him to train assistant technicians and technicians in courses designed by the curriculum advisor.

- The CDE construction monitoring staff (local engineers) should be brought on board as quickly as possible and rotated in key provinces where they will have easy access to project sites.
- FAR agreements should not need to be signed before construction work starts but rather before a critical point in the construction is reached as determined by USAID engineers.
- The three road projects for which Letters of Intent have been issued should be undertaken as road improvement projects and the cost estimates should include only that work necessary to upgrade the roads from their current state to AID standards.
- USAID engineers should work together with RDD engineers to develop a rate schedule for man-days/kilometer for different types of terrain and soil in order to facilitate cost estimates.
- USAID/CDE should examine USAID/RDD design standards and construction specification in light of possible adjustments to make them more appropriate to the Afghan environment.
- The USAID engineers should meet with RDD staff to examine the potential within RDD to design and construct roads to AID standards. Constraints should be examined and USAID should give assistance as needed (e.g., a formal training seminar, advice to design engineers).
- USAID should request the United Nations to plan an RDD training program with USAID participation so that each organization can complement the other's inputs without duplication or serious gaps in the program.
- The Rural Works Project should actively measure success of non-FAR projects using FAR criteria as an indicator of improved RDD capabilities, thereby expanding accountability of the project to cover more than just the FAR projects. The structural soundness of 30 percent of FAR projects (selected randomly) completed during the Afghan year 1355 should be assessed before July 1977. The Project Paper proposed improved capabilities of RDD as an output but did not back this up with adequate inputs, output indicators and targets, and the means of verification. These should be included in the revised project design.

MINOR IRRIGATION SYSTEMS (MIS)

Minor irrigation systems are projects significantly larger than single intakes — perhaps reaching \$50,000 in cost. These have already been brought within the scope of the Rural Works Project. Four Letters of Intent have been issued to RDD for AID to cover the costs of designing and implementing four minor irrigation systems. AID would cover 75 percent of the costs.

CECSAR, contracted by RDD, has already begun to do the design work on one of the four systems. CECSAR is being tested to see how well it can design the project and what the cost will be; it must carry out all survey work including the socio-economic survey.

The plan in RDD is to improve 156 systems over a period of five years. Of these 156 systems USAID has been asked to assist on 30. The UNDP is planning to support a large portion of the program. At this writing there is little but planning which has been accomplished on the MIS program.

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| RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE AID INVOLVEMENT IN THE MIS PROGRAM |
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- As RDD enters the field of MIS improvement, it will need considerable help from USAID. The socioeconomic surveys represent one area where USAID should make an immediate contribution. USAID staff and/or contractors responsible for developing the information system

for the integrated rural development experiment should also make an input into the MIS socioeconomic survey. Unlike the individual water control structure subprojects of the Rural Works Project, MIS subprojects will be on a big enough financial scale to afford substantial socioeconomic analysis to be used as one input into project selection and design.

- The MIS subprojects should also draw on the services of an agricultural specialist if hired by USAID for the integrated rural development project. He would analyze the MIS agricultural environment and make recommendations for project inputs that would give more benefit to the small farmers from the improved irrigation systems. The MIS program could be designed to increase assistance to small farmers as more is learned about technological packages for them and as RDD develops its capacity to provide a broader range of assistance and to improve its communication with other ministries that can provide services for RDD requested areas.
- We recommend that in cases where it is not cost-effective to insure that the poor are receiving a substantial portion of the benefits -- that is, in small water intakes, etc. -- such projects be phased out from USAID support. They can be replaced by AID funding to the MIS program which should be large enough to justify the expenditure of social/economic research needed to insure compliance with AID's stated objectives in reaching the rural poor majority.¹

¹ See pp. A-63-66, for discussion on benefit incidence.

THE INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT
OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

RDD Programs in Rural Development

In addition to the rural works components, RDD has embarked upon a program of integrated rural development. There is a good deal of confusion about what such a program might entail, and few clear policy guidelines are yet established. Although four or perhaps five provinces have been designated by the High Council as areas for rural development, the underlying concept is district development.¹ RDD calls the areas to be developed "regions." We found signs of ongoing activities other than rural works only in the district of Ghorband, in the province of Parwan, a few hours' drive from Kabul. Other than Ghorband, there is a Finnish team conducting a socioeconomic survey in Badakhshan Province, and an Indian team conducted a similar survey in Katawaz District of Ghazni Province. Other rural development areas are Gulran District in Herat Province and a yet unnamed District in the Province of Nangahar. With the exception of placement of village level workers -- twelfth grade graduates who have been recruited and trained -- there are no special activities that we could detect in any region other than Ghorband under the auspices of the rural development component of RDD.

¹ We originally believed that a region, which is RDD's term for an area to be developed, was a province. It has since become clear that a region is a district, or two districts, in which development activity will take place.

Since the government does not see clearly where it should be going, and is picking and choosing from various recommendations which have been offered, the question of development policy is open. Approval of six components of a 25 component plan leaves in doubt the government's intentions concerning the remaining policy areas.¹

Indian Development Efforts

Some years ago Indian bilateral aid established a micro-hydro plant in Ghorband, a plant which is now delivering 200 kw of unused electric power and sufficient water to irrigate 1,410 additional jeribs of land. The Indian team's head (who also worked on the micro-hydro project) produced a report on Ghorband entitled "Rural Community Development Project, Ghorband" in which he proposes a set of "programs of development." He identified 25 different activities, to be conducted by a staff of 61 persons, with a total two-year budget -- staff, capital and operating expenses -- of \$125,000. RDD has apparently decided to undertake and fund the following activities:²

- Village level workers -- twelfth-grade graduates assigned to live in the major towns of the district. Eighty were recruited, 40 trained in a three-month course. Eight such village workers are now living in towns in Ghorband helping to establish better communications with villagers.

¹ The Indian team has little or no funding support.

² The 25-component plan for Ghorband was developed by the Indian CD advisor to RDD and is apparently being used as a guideline by RDD.

- Specialists in agriculture (four), cooperatives (one), medicine (five) (including a doctor) have been seconded or recruited for work with RDD in Ghorband. Other specialists in education and cottage industry will be posted there. Eventually, a team of 12 persons, headed by a project manager, should reside in the central town of the district.
- Resettlement for 282 landless families on newly irrigated farmland from water made available by the micro-hydro plant.
- An experimental farm adjacent to the land resettlement project, just getting underway with headquarters buildings to be built this year.
- The construction and staffing of two schools (this portion of the plan is even more unclear than most).
- The establishment of cooperatives, with a group of 20 farmers who have agreed to participate in an almond marketing cooperative.

In addition there are other projects which have been recommended for Ghorband, including a ten-kilometer road under FAR, several additional FAR rural works, and a CARE/Medico plan to begin with a potable water system for one town, to be extended into a women's development project.

The prime mover in recommendations for integrated rural development appears to be the Indian bilateral team leader, Mr. Mathur, who wrote the Ghorband proposal and who is writing surveys and plans for the other districts as they are selected for the rural development program. Mr. Mathur has a large list of problems, recommends action on all fronts, has no priority set or criteria for determining which problems should be given first attention, prefers to hire large numbers of permanent

staff, and has no overall conceptual framework under which the various "activities" of rural development must fall. He is, however, continuing to produce plans, discuss them with Mr. Maram (the unofficial RDD third deputy who handles RD activities for RDD), write questionnaires for socioeconomic surveys to be conducted by the village workers (not yet implemented), and send memoranda to the High Council about the coordination of RDD in the "districts" slated for rural development. He is also a fairly reasonable man with a good feel for local community development who could be a valuable asset if harnessed into an overall rural development effort.

RDD Progress to Date

A comprehensive analysis of what RDD is or is not doing correctly requires the formulation of a model for district development. This is outlined in Appendix B. However, it seems rather obvious that there are good, as well as bad points about current RDD efforts.

First, RDD has made the correct decision to emphasize the need for effective two-way communications between the government and local villagers. The recruitment of village workers, their training and dispatch to be responsible for two or three communities is a necessary first step.¹ So is the detailing

¹ Assuming there are 50,000 people in Ghorband, and a fully-staffed contingent of 32 village workers, there would be an average of one "communicator" per 1,500 inhabitants.

of specialists to work at the district level. This is a perfectly sound approach for a comprehensive rural development program.

There appears to be no policy reasons (from RDD's point of view) why villagers themselves could not be added into a bottom tier of a hierarchy which begins with the technical specialists. Either with training as paraprofessional extensionists, or conducting demonstration plots in their own communities, these villagers could multiply the impact of the village workers (the twelfth graders).

The communications chain has, as yet, nothing of substance to deliver to rural villagers. There is no agricultural technology which has been tested and proven under appropriate conditions (low cash costs), no preventative health care which is known to be effective and easily transferable, no winter adult education courses created specifically for rural needs, no simple construction techniques available for new houses, etc. In short, the communications chain has been put into place prior to development of a worthwhile set of modern technology which has been tested and packaged specifically for the illiterate farmer. In the meantime, village-level workers continue to help identify needs which the government should satisfy, and requests for more rural works continue to pile up at the RDD provincial headquarters.

RDD and other donors apparently believe that separate activities conducted in the same general area (that is, within a district) constitute an "integrated" program. It should be clear that activities (a road here, a health clinic there) do not make a rural development program which needs a limited and defined purpose, and a set of implementing instructions so that all components of the program in the area can support the agreed-upon thrust. Without such a unifying concept, "more" activities will be mistakenly equated with "more" development.

Perhaps most important and most potentially damaging, RDD has established an integrated development program by assuming the responsibility for all development activities within the district of Ghorband. The cooperative specialist is on the RDD payroll, and the Ministry of Agriculture will not work with cooperatives in the district. The health clinic and staff belong to RDD; the teachers, cottage industry staff and agricultural extensionists will be on RDD's payroll.¹ RDD is not coordinating the activities of various ministries at the district level; it is assuming the responsibilities of the ministries. We believe this portends poorly for the future of development in Afghanistan.

While such a system may work for a few pilot projects, the ire of the various ministries will soon grow as RDD assumes

¹ The doctors are the only staff obtained temporarily from another ministry and they will return to the Ministry of Public Health after two years with RDD.

their responsibilities, using their staff (now ex-staff). In addition, it provides ministries with an excellent excuse for not worrying about village-level programs -- RDD has taken charge of those. RDD will also be unable to backstop the technical requirements of rural development in agriculture, health, education, and must at some point draw for expertise upon other ministries.

In short, the path being following in Ghorband does not appear to lead to a national rural development plan. If this is the case, then it seriously questions the use of "integration" rather than "coordination" at the district level in what is acknowledged to be a pilot program.

AID Support to Integrated Rural Development

A number of offices of USAID/Kabul have an interest in village-level programs, programs which could constitute the basis for a rural development effort. These include Health, Education and Rural Development. There is obviously an opportunity for the various offices to cooperate and attempt to bring a cooperative spirit to their respective ministries. Since a comprehensive development program should include village health services, basic as well as non-formal education and rural works, there appears to be the potential for mutually supporting efforts. This has not yet occurred.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE AID INVOLVEMENT
IN RDD'S INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ¹

- We found little support for the IRD section of RDD within the RD section of AID to date. There have been a few meetings, some paperwork on various activities which might occur together in Ghorband — some of the rural works and basic education projects. So long as these are clearly recognized as components and not as the rural development program itself, they should be continued. However, the rural works budget should pay for rural works, even in a district in which rural development is underway. The rural development budget, where FAR is not applicable, will need to be conserved for other more critical aspects of the program.

¹ For detail on specific recommendations, see pp. 64-67.

PROJECT ISSUES: 1. PROJECT SELCTION --
DEVELOPMENT APPROACH, LOCAL ACTION AND SCARCE RESOURCES¹

The Background

"There is no adequate GOA precedent for cash payment of unskilled labor in RDD projects. Unskilled labor has always been voluntary, conscripted or paid with food. USAID has urged the RDD to pay for unskilled labor used on rural works. In the future, RDD will request the Prime Ministry to approve unskilled labor payment on a project-by-project basis. Although this is not as satisfactory as the adoption of a GOA policy to pay unskilled labor, it will be a considerable improvement over the present situation."

Project Paper
Rural Works Project
Kabul, Afghanistan
January 22, 1975
Page 42

"Policy: The Government of Afghanistan agrees that a clear policy will be enacted for the payment of unskilled labor on RDD projects, including road improvement construction by September 30, 1975."

Project Agreement
Rural Works
AID/The Rural Development Department
Kabul, Afghanistan
May 31, 1975
Page 3

Article 3 of the Charter of the Rural Development Department states:

"The basic aim of the department is development of all sectors of rural areas through the administration of economic and social programmes for the public benefit and upgrading the standards of rural life at a stage where economic development of the villages depends on the people of the village."

¹ "Local Action" is defined as the local commitment to a development project. It consists of both decisionmaking responsibility over project components, as well as labor, land, materials, transportation and cash payments.

"In pursuance of this aim the Rural Development Department encourages and assists villages to help themselves and the keynote of the department's operations is the active participation of the village both in the initiation and implementation of projects designed to raise the standard of living of the village. This criterion of village participation is quite rigidly followed and unless the village is prepared to make a contribution, within its ability to provide, the project is not normally pursued. This village contribution usually consists of the provision of labor and local materials, sometimes accompanied by a cash contribution."

Rural Development Project
 Republic of Afghanistan
 Request from the Government
 to the UNDP for Technical
 Assistance
 March 1976
 Page 1

The Analysis

Twenty-four percent of all FAR payments for RDD rural works are for a combination of unskilled labor and local materials (which are free, but which require unskilled labor to help transport them to the construction site). Only one project of the 20 submitted and approved for reimbursement failed to contain labor payments. Included in the total were irrigation system intakes which have traditionally been maintained, year after year, by voluntary, locally-organized, community labor. Rather than assisting in the process of developing local capabilities, the USAID/FAR policy is deliberately reducing the traditional practices of voluntary contributions to projects which are clearly in the community's self-interest. This suggests a woeful lack of understanding of the development approach which will generate the most local action to obtain maximum benefit from

scarce development resources.

Local observers of traditional Afghanistan villages report on the disparity between the condition of the mosque, which is annually repaired and repainted, and the school, which is left to the disattention of the Ministry of Education. It is a clear distinction, in the minds of villagers, between something which is "ours" and something which is "theirs." "Ours" is repaired and maintained. "Theirs" is of little concern, even if it provides benefits. The essence of development is to determine investment opportunities which are available to the rural populations which bring increased income, understanding, cooperation and quality of life. To be successful (that is, to be adopted) villagers must identify the investments as "ours." When such opportunities can be proven effective under villagers' own circumstances, they will undertake, individually or collectively, to make the required commitment of labor and resources. Government should arrange to do less, as it assists the villagers to do more themselves.

Development resources are in very scarce supply and in nearly unlimited demand. The "felt needs" of local villagers have already overwhelmed the capacity of R&D to provide rural works support. The development approach to be used in this circumstance should be as follows:

USE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO
MAXIMIZE THE COMMITMENT OF THE LOCAL POPULATION IN
PRODUCTIVE INVESTMENT IN THEIR OWN INTERESTS

This is the only reasonable criterion to be used to select projects from among thousands of potential rural works which are identified by villagers as in their self-interest. The rule should be: choose those projects which provide the most labor, materials, cash, within the bounds of local economic circumstances to complement RDD's inputs. The use of this criterion has been eliminated by labor payments under the FAR system.

The FAR system is not the only culprit. Mohammed Heidar Nowrouz, a previous advisor to RDD, wrote the following conclusions in his final report:

"RDD has received approval from the Prime Ministry to make cash payment for labor on projects that are under USAID reimbursement agreement.

"The method of payment for labor on rural works projects consists of the following:

1. Voluntary labor, beneficiaries of the project served as laborers themselves.
2. Voluntary labor -- where the villagers and landowners hire labor and pay it themselves through contributions.
3. Number 2 plus WFP food payment.
4. WFP food payment.
5. WFP food payment plus 10 to 20 afs/day by RDD.
6. Pure cash payment as under most USAID projects.

"Usually there is little consideration given to the type of project, the pattern of benefit incidence, etc. in determining the method of payment. Often, indiscriminate WFP food payments on a project causes

the beneficiaries of another project to show reluctance to volunteer labor or local material. This is detrimental to the spirit of rural development which relies upon local initiative and effort. Paying labor on projects that benefit the general public, like a road connecting two Woliswalis or a bridge opening a large valley can be easily justified. On the other hand, with an intake structure that directly benefits five villages whose people regularly rebuild the intake on their own, it would be best not to make any labor payment, thus allowing and encouraging the RDD tenet of government and people cooperation."

RDD administers the World Food Program (WFP), a 10.9 million dollar three-and-a-half-year project. It is "free" to RDD which tends to use it for all projects where it is applicable (provinces must be approved for WFP payments), since if it does not, the food will be used by Public Works or some other government agency. The engineers who control RDD are appreciative of the time-saving nature of paid labor; volunteer labor works fewer hours per day and arrives at the project site with less certainty. In addition, there is an income transfer to the rural poor which is sometimes used to justify payments. None of these reasons explain the lead taken by AID to insure that the government would change its policy on all unskilled labor payments.

According to Charles Johnson who participated in the Rural Works Project design and drafting of the Project Agreement, "In the past labor for road construction was always conscripted so provision was made in the ProAg for an RDD policy regarding payment for labor."¹ The DAI evaluation team found no evidence

¹ Interview with Mr. Charles Johnson, May 1, 1976.

of conscripted labor for any RDD projects, although there was a report of two instances where a governor tried unsuccessfully to conscript labor.¹ The evidence suggests that the Afghan farmer is extremely independent and can not be forced to contribute his labor on any project for which he does not clearly perceive benefit. ~~Farmers are traditionally required by their~~ village leaders to contribute labor to works projects that will be beneficial to the village (e.g., rebuilding jui intakes after floods), and this should not be confused with conscripted labor.²

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AID INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECT SELECTION

- AID should insist upon a differentiation among projects under rural works. Large bridges and road networks which are clearly outside community influence and which are essentially part of the infrastructure under the responsibility of the government should continue to have full labor payments.³ Those projects which are

¹ Interview with Mr. Ismael of RDD, May 5, 1976.

² Comment by A. Nehoda: "It is true that conscripted labor is no longer in general use throughout Afghanistan. It has been banned by the Republican Regime. All labor must be either paid or voluntary. In the latter case a distinction need be made between active 'voluntary' -- 'I volunteer' -- and 'passive voluntary' -- 'I was volunteered.' Although the central government no longer relies on conscription of labor, it should be understood that strong local pressure has supplanted central government pressure in regard to 'voluntary' labor."

³ The 75 percent labor payment theory is unworkable in practice. When some workers from a village are being paid, others from the same village will not work for free. This leaves those who are employed to share the "voluntary"

essentially in the community sphere -- water intakes, drains, flumes, footbridges, etc. -- should not receive labor payments either from USAID or WFP. Instead, the selection criteria for those projects should depend upon the amount of labor, materials and cash which will be contributed by the local population. This will encourage the projects to be "theirs" (from the point of view of RDD and AID) and not "ours."

- USAID should recommend to Washington in as forceful way as possible that the WFP assistance be terminated or be controlled to the point that it cannot be used to pay for unskilled labor in an indiscriminate way.
- Payments for local unskilled labor should be discontinued to those people who will be obtaining direct immediate benefits from an RDD project. This should be the case for all water control structures (minor irrigation systems) and for bridges that are clearly intended to benefit a particular village, are within the immediate territory of the benefiting village, and for which the villagers can perceive the benefits. Integrated rural development projects should also be limited to voluntary unskilled labor.
- Construction projects for roads and for bridges other than the kind described above should provide payment for all unskilled labor.
- The cost of local materials is generally in terms of the labor necessary to dig or cut the materials, load or unload them, and transport them (when RDD transport not available). Payment for this labor should be dealt with in the same way as the local unskilled labor payments mentioned above.¹

portion of the labor, meaning that instead of 60 afs/day, the workers would receive 45 afs/day. They will not work for 45 afs/day, which is the reason that labor receives full payment in FAR-funded projects. Projects with World Food Program assistance have given differing food payments to workers from different villages, depending on how directly the village would benefit from the rural works under construction.

¹ See pp.A-45-49 for fuller discussion.

- For both integrated rural development projects and minor irrigation system projects, every attempt should be made to (1) demonstrate that RDD officials are working with the villagers to bring real benefits to the village, and (2) communicate directly with the villagers and participate in Village Council meetings in order to maximize local participation and facilitate the setting of priorities for development.¹

¹ See pp. A-41-42 for fuller discussion.

PROJECT ISSUES: 2. FIXED AMOUNT REIMBURSEMENT (FAR)
AN EVALUATION OF THE FAR METHOD
AS APPLIED TO THE RURAL WORKS PROJECT

Rationale for Use of FAR

The FAR system¹ was first used in the Philippines for two AID projects in the early 1970's. The results were highly praised. A GAO report identifies the advantages of FAR as follows:

- The United States does not have to bear cost overruns. Because it pays only the amount previously agreed to, irrespective of the actual costs incurred, the United States is not responsible for additional costs.
- The method transfers management responsibility to the recipient government while reducing U.S. direct participation.
- Because the recipient government has to bear some of the costs and invest its own funds during project completion, there is greater assurance that projects undertaken are of high priority to the recipient government.
- The method minimizes the need for comprehensive post audit by the United States.
- When a project is not as successful as originally planned and does not reach expectations, failures are less likely to be attributable to the United States.
- More careful planning, programming and development of specific management systems at the outset of programs enhance the probability of success.

¹ AID defines FAR as follows: "Amount of reimbursement is fixed in advance based upon reasonable cost estimates reviewed and approved by AID. Reimbursement is determined in advance as being made upon the physical completion of a project or subproject, upon the subproject becoming operable, such as a staffed and furnished school, or some quantifiable element within the project. The emphasis in this method is upon reimbursement based on planned outputs rather than inputs. There are two essential aspects: definition of the total project and reimbursement upon satisfactory completion of agreed-upon work." AIDTO Circular A-513, July 17, 1974.

- And, most importantly of all, the method protects the U.S. interest because it insures that funds are being effectively used in the manner and for the purposes desired since funds are paid out only after the project is completed in accordance with the agreed plans and specifications.¹

The GAO report then identifies some constraints and problems associated with the FAR system that were not encountered in the Philippines but which could arise in other countries. The major problems revolve around the need for adequate monitoring of construction by U.S. officials, and adequate technical and managerial expertise to be provided by the host government.²

Experience in the rural works project has shown that all the above listed advantages are applicable to the Afghan environment, with the exception of the second item in that direct participation by U.S. officials has remained high.³ This can be

¹ Attachment to AIDTO Circular A-513, p. 3.

² Ibid., p. 4.

³ In a USAID/A cable to USAID/Liberia on the subject of "USAID/Afghanistan's Experience with Fixed Amount Reimbursement," drafted by C. W. Johnson and dated 11/11/75, the following was written:

"2. With respect to manpower, USAID/A experience to date indicates substantial additional manpower requirement to implement FAR.

- A. ...As we expand in respective Phase Twos, we estimate additional manpower may be needed (perhaps additional FSL professional staff).
- B. USAID engineering office deeply involved implementation FAR projects respect design standards, construction specs, site location and lay out, design approvals and cost estimating.... In Phase II, we will require additional engineering capability....
- C. USAID Controller has also made substantial commitment of staff time to: (a) monitor the work of a contractor who collected commodity prices (which are now used as a guide for reasonableness

attributed to the lack of adequate technical and managerial expertise provided by the host government. The level of expertise in the Rural Development Department has not been high enough to execute projects to AID standards without support from AID technicians. The problem of inadequate Afghan expertise was not only foreseen prior to project implementation but the development of the required expertise was given as a major reason for adopting the FAR system in this project. FAR was to be used:

- As a lever to introduce project planning, uniform engineering and construction standards; and
- As a lever to improve the quality of work and to improve Afghan capabilities.¹

It was thought that once RDD saw FAR dollars and understood that to qualify for FAR funding it would have to improve its construction standards, it would undertake the necessary improvement post haste. But RDD lacked the in-house capability to upgrade design and construction standards.

The Project Paper is not at all clear in regard to how much of a direct input the project was to provide (aside from the

of GOA cost estimates); and (b) to review and approve cost estimates for individual projects....

- D. USAID Program Office made a large commitment of staff time on FAR when projects were being designed and in the writing of the first Letter of Understanding to implement each project....

¹ Memorandum of C. W. Johnson dated 2/14/76.

FAR money and USAID monitors) to upgrade RDD capabilities.

First, the PP states:

A proposed output of this project is to establish capabilities in planning..., evaluation, training, and road improvement construction; and to improve the quality of engineering designs and project construction. (p. 19)

Another section of the PP states:

It is not the intent that USAID or any USAID contractor would provide assistance to the GOA in improving their capability to design projects, write specifications, or establish standards, since the UN and other agencies are providing this expertise, but rather to emphasize that these inputs are needed to enable USAID to determine whether plans submitted are adequate. (Appendix VI, p. 2)

The ability of the UN to provide this expertise is refuted on page 54 of the PP as follows:

A group of UN engineers from several different countries have been giving advice in design to the RDD. The result is a variegated series of designs, each wearing the mark of the home country of each particular advisor. This is unfortunate....

The PP also states that USAID will make a direct input, in clear contradiction to the statement in Appendix VI:

USAID will also assist in quality control by providing in-service training to RDD design and construction supervisors in cooperation with the UN team and German volunteers. (p. 53)

There is no indication in the Project Paper how the in-service training was to be provided or which USAID personnel were to provide it. The in-service training was perceived as

a need. But the project, centered on the FAR concept of providing the leverage without providing the technical assistance, made it necessary to deal with technical assistance needs in an indirect, and what turned out to be an insufficient, manner.

Pilot Phase Experience

A Success

When the Rural Works Project Pilot Phase commenced, RDD designs submitted to USAID engineers for approval as FAR projects were of very poor quality:¹ there were no uniform standards and specifications around which performance quality could be built. USAID engineers developed uniform standards and specifications for RDD and then worked with RDD engineers in informal, on-the-job training on designs to be used for FAR-funded projects.² RDD was cognizant of its deficiencies and according to President Sediq, welcomed this U.S. technical assistance to upgrade RDD capabilities.

The DAI evaluation team found unanimity among all persons interviewed who were involved in the project that the Pilot Phase was very successful in improving RDD operations, not only for improvement of design standards and construction specifications but also in development of cost estimating procedures and improved planning, construction and monitoring systems.³

¹ Interview with John Standish and Don Reilly of CDE staff, 5/23/76.

² Ibid.

³ See pp. A-49-55 for more analysis of Pilot Phase achievement.

FAR as a Cause of RDD improvements

It is not possible to clearly draw a cause and effect relationship between these RDD improvements and the FAR system. At least two factors seem to have eroded any clear leverage FAR might have exerted.

First, FAR financial support was not important to RDD during the pilot phase. As it was, RDD used only about 60 percent of the budget allocated to it by the Ministry of Finance.¹ Furthermore, the FAR dollars did not go to RDD but rather to the Ministry of Finance and until March of 1976 RDD did not have drawing rights on the FAR dollars for purchase of equipment.²

Second, the level of technical assistance provided by the USAID staff during the Pilot Phase, though executed in an impromptu fashion, went clearly beyond what was anticipated under FAR.³

Phase I Experience

FAR Procedural Slowdowns

The improvement of RDD capabilities in the Pilot Phase motivated USAID to go ahead with Phase I of the Rural Works Project.

¹ The Ministry of Finance allocated 126 million afs to RDD for fiscal year 1354. Of this sum RDD was able to use only 75 million afs.

² For fiscal year 1355 RDD was allocated a budget of 61.6 million afs. Although this is lower than the previous year's budget allocation, RDD was given the right to use all foreign exchange contributions to RDD as increments to its budget. The Ministry of Finance assured RDD that if this still was not enough to meet its budgetary needs, more money could be made available.

³ Op. cit., cable to USAID/Liberia, 11/11/75, p. 1.

Phase I was also based on the FAR strategy.

After three months of Phase I operations, President Sediq made a request to drop the project;¹ all RDD proposals to USAID were either being rejected by USAID reviewers or were tied up in FAR procedures. In response to the disaffection of RDD and pressures within the USAID Mission to approve some RDD proposals, the project staff loosened up its procedures for project approval. When President Sediq saw RDD projects finally being approved he agreed to let the AID project continue.

In the Mission serious conflicts arose over the relaxing of project approval procedures. There was a change in project staff, and the new personnel brought in views that did not coincide with those of the departing staff and with other remaining USAID staff. The justification for specific FAR procedures and criteria were not clear. Those involved in the conflict were either new to the job and were still learning about RDD capabilities and procedures and the Afghan environment or had little direct experience with RDD and were strongly committed to a particular course of action.²

It appeared to the DAI evaluation team that the basic problem was lack of confidence in RDD to do the job as required

¹ Sediq apparently made this request in a letter to the Ministry of Plan in October, 1975. The RD office was familiar with the contents of the letter.

² This included minimal technical assistance, no commodity assistance and strict adherence to FAR procedures and standards.

by the FAR system. This lack of confidence was not unjustified. RDD operations were improving but were still not at a high enough technical level that they could meet USAID standards without the aid of USAID technical advisors and a special effort from the RDD staff. The USAID Mission did not have the manpower necessary to meet the required level of assistance, and RDD did not appear very appreciative of the extra effort required to meet the high USAID standards. USAID processing of FAR projects was especially handicapped by insufficient engineering staff for design and monitoring of rural works.

A CDE engineer was not assigned full-time to the Rural Works Project until May 1976.¹ USAID engineers had not been available to make site visits in a timely manner that fit the RDD construction schedule. Although the Project Paper called for a third-country contract with an engineering firm for projects' monitoring and inspection,² no engineering firm was brought on board to undertake this function.³

Because of its inadequate technical and managerial expertise RDD was not able to supervise its operations to the point

¹ Until May the CDE office had been short-staffed because of home leaves and then the three-month absence of Brent Gatch, who left Kabul to participate in the AID Development Studies Program.

² Project Paper (PP, Rural Works Project), January 22, 1975, p. 24.

³ As of June 1976, Afghan engineers were to be hired on personal service contracts to do project monitoring and inspection. The current plan is to have six engineers on board by August. These engineers will be responsible for monitoring all of USAID's FAR projects. The preceding is based on an interview with John Standish and Don Reilly, May 31, 1976.

that information coming from RDD headquarters could be relied on and thereby lighten USAID's monitoring role. Almost every step in the FAR procedures became a laborious task of checking and double checking between USAID and RDD personnel.

Non-Coincidence of FAR Procedures and RDD Procedures

Leaving aside the procedural slowdowns, until very recently formal approvals for RDD projects under FAR were given only after USAID review of the completed design and costing estimates. Within the RDD system this meant that the project had been approved, costed and planned for implementation with schedules established for needed materials and transportation. A rejection by USAID this late in the process or a request for changes in the design or in the cost elements caused serious delays which RDD was unable or unwilling to incur in a number of cases.¹ Notification of RDD approval of projects was sent to the provincial RDD headquarters. When the construction teams arrived in the field, they initiated projects based upon local labor availability and water levels. Long delays could mean that projects could not be completed in the current construction year. Consequently, RDD often continued with its projects as scheduled,² a policy which provoked serious differences between

¹ The CDE engineers interviewed reported that projects which were turned down because they do not meet USAID design standards were then implemented by RDD. Although the CDE office does not have documentation to indicate the number of such projects, they estimate that it is around 80 percent of the projects CDE rejects. President Sediq confirmed that he will use other sources of funding (generally WFP) for projects rejected by USAID.

² Interview with President Sediq, April 29, 1976.

FAR Leverage Still Unclear

RDD's Manpower Constraint. The major constraint to RDD expansion is the limited number of skilled technical personnel available to RDD for recruitment each year. According to President Sediq, RDD can count on a maximum of only three new engineers each year.¹ With the 23 engineers currently employed at RDD, an addition of three percent will not create major increases in RDD output. The same problem also exists with technicians. RDD can count on recruiting only about ten new technicians each year to add to its present staff.² According to George Glaister, the UN Senior Advisor to RDD, the new recruits are fresh out of school (both engineers and technicians) where their education was almost exclusively theory. They require training in practical application before they can be fully effective in RDD.³

FAR leverage does not provide a solution to the problem of inadequate manpower.

RDD's Commodity Constraint. Besides the manpower constraint in RDD, there also exists the constraint of inadequate equipment for increasing the quality and quantity of rural works projects. RDD's problem has not been obtaining the foreign exchange to buy equipment but rather overcoming the very difficult procurement procedures of the Afghan government. Under current

¹ Interview with Sediq, April 29, 1976.

² Ibid.

³ Interview with Glaister, April 30, 1976.

procurement procedures it can take up to two years to get new equipment in hand.

The problem is timing. RDD lacks many small equipment items such as water pumps, small cement mixers, survey and drafting equipment, and camping supplies.¹ To wait a minimum of one-and-a-half years to get these items will cause delays in RDD's rate of expansion.

Under the FAR system the host government receives foreign exchange when it is reimbursed for completed FAR projects; it can then use this money in whatever way it desires.² The USAID policy has been to not include commodity assistance in FAR projects. The basic philosophy was stated by Charles W. Johnson in a memorandum dated May 1, 1976:

"AID financed and administered commodity procurement places primary responsibility on AID to deliver goods to the Afghans for their use and it is a matter of only of "good faith" that the Afghans will use the goods in the ways which were originally agreed which justified the commodity procurement in the first instance. FAR places primary responsibility on the Afghans to mobilize their resources to achieve outputs and the reward is cash reimbursement with which they can replenish or enhance their stock of goods if they so choose.

"Another problem with AID direct commodity procurement is that the Afghans don't learn much about the process.... The employment of FAR, instead of providing commodities, is one way to lessen and ultimately eliminate this dependence. When FAR is used the advisory assistance should be directed to helping the Afghans do procurement themselves rather than doing it for them."

¹ Interview with Mr. Azimi of RDD, May 24, 1976.

² Attachment to AIDTO Circular A-573, p. 5.

This philosophy fits well in current development theory but its strength breaks down when examined in the light of the particular circumstances regarding the rural works project and RDD. There is an implied assumption that one cannot rely on "good faith" that the Afghans will use the goods in the ways which were originally agreed to. This assumption is based on past experiences with large commodity drops for projects that were not necessarily priority projects of the Afghan Government. The FAR system was devised to give "greater assurance that projects undertaken are of high priority to the recipient government," since the recipient government has to make a sizable contribution of its own.¹ Evidence suggests that the RDD operations are of high priority to the Afghan Government.² Also, RDD has been making good use of the equipment it has, and its intention to use new additional equipment in an appropriate manner is clear. The Ministry of Finance has made the FAR dollars available to RDD for purchase of new equipment which confirms priority of RDD operations.³

Under these circumstances, FAR as an incentive to overcome this constraint is irrelevant. The incentive is not lacking but the means are. FAR is helpless in providing that means.

¹ Attachment to AIDTO Circular A-513, p. 3.

² This is evidenced not only in the policy statements of President Daoud, but also the establishment of RDD within the Prime Ministry and the sizable budget allocations from the Ministry of Finance (see p. 49, footnote 2).

³ See footnote 2 on p. 49.

RDD's Labor Payment Problem. RDD's budget does not provide for payments to local unskilled labor. One attractive feature of FAR funding is that it provides RDD with a means for paying labor on projects where voluntary labor is unavailable.

~~However, the World Food Program supplies food to substitute~~ for cash payment for local unskilled labor. In fact, in some projects where the FAR Agreement was signed after construction had begun, local unskilled labor was already being paid through WFP.¹ The WFP food ration is valued by workers in a number of projects as being less than the daily wage, and in these cases RDD supplements the ration with 10-20 afghanis.² The WFP assistance is not tied to any specific project performance standards and there is very little monitoring or control of which projects receive the assistance and how the food is distributed. In one case that came to the evaluation team's attention, the food reached the village but never made it from the Malik's house to the hands of the laborers.³

This lack of accountability makes WFP assistance easy for RDD to use when and where it wants. Only about five percent of RDD projects use voluntary labor. The rest rely on WFP or FAR for paying local unskilled labor.

¹ Interviews with RDD staff.

² Ibid.

³ Dr. Jackson's field trip to Gumarán Bridge Project, May 3, 1976. This project was rejected by USAID and then was picked up by WFP. The food arrived late and was placed in the house of Malik. At that time the laborers had yet to receive their rations, were very irate and have refused to continue to work on the project.

When FAR pays for local unskilled labor, it pays only 75 percent of this cost. RDD regulations forbid RDD paying the 25 percent remaining, and President Sediq told the evaluation team that he requests the laborers to work for free 25 percent of their time. Evidence from field trips showed that local unskilled laborers paid under the FAR system were being paid for 100 percent of their work time, so apparently RDD is pulling money from other sources to cover the additional 25 percent. RDD must supplement these payments just as it supplements WFP assistance. Thus RDD gains no advantage through FAR over WFP.

As long as WFP assistance is available, there is little demand for FAR to pay local labor costs. As such the availability of WFP undercuts any leverage FAR might exert as a result of the labor payment feature.

Demonstration Effect of FAR Projects. In order for FAR projects to have a demonstration effect, at least theoretically, they would need to show up clearly superior to less rigorously designed and constructed projects undertaken by RDD. Thus far this has not been demonstrated, due at least in part to an absence of follow-up on any completed projects.

Even then, the demonstration effect of the FAR projects would be worthwhile only as RDD were capable of taking action to meet those same standards for all its projects. Sediq expressed his appreciation for all technical assistance directed at upgrading his staff. Such assistance is coming from a number

of donors. It can be argued that the RDD staff does not need to see successful FAR projects to appreciate the need for better projects and to improve performance.

Conclusions

1. The FAR procedures have created difficulty for the Rural Works Project mainly due to the two issues addressed by the GAO report: (a) adequate ability of the USAID Mission to monitor the project, and (b) adequate technical and managerial expertise provided by the host government.
2. FAR has not acted as an incentive for improving RDD performance.
3. In view of RDD's constraints, FAR alone cannot bring about exponential expansion of RDD's output. As USAID and RDD increase their capacity to plan, implement and monitor FAR projects, the utility of the FAR system as identified in the GAO report will increase. Attempts to use the FAR system for purposes other than those identified in the GAO report (i.e., to improve recipient government managerial and technical abilities) have not been successful and should be abandoned.

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| RECOMMENDATIONS: THE FAR SYSTEM |
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- The FAR system should be flexible enough to provide assistance in areas where clear bottlenecks exist. Certainly development principles should be maintained, but when problems arise these principles should be reviewed to see to what degree they are valid for the specific case at hand. The inflexible adherence to some notional FAR standard is not always in the best interest of development in Afghanistan. Thus selective commodity assistance or a specialized training program could be used to overcome particular bottlenecks to expanded RDD output.
- USAID project staff should increase the amount of time spent in RDD offices and in the field relative to the time spent in USAID offices. In this way the steps required to implement a FAR project can be planned out in advance, and information from RDD will be more reliable and more precise. Increased USAID confidence in RDD managerial and technical capabilities will facilitate communication. Increased USAID involvement in RDD planning will decrease the need for RDD to explain itself to USAID.
- The planning for RDD construction has stabilized so that the USAID staff can better time their site visits and project design reviews. Although USAID engineers have not been able to travel to the sites as they are selected, they should at least arrive soon after, once the major projects have been selected for next year's construction. Designs can and should be reviewed by USAID engineers during the design phase over the winter months. This gives enough time for revisions and changes prior to the construction season which begins in March.
- USAID should further improve RDD capabilities to do cost estimations by providing a part-time advisor from the USAID Controller's Office to work with both the RDD Planning Office and the Accounting Office. Working in close collaboration with RDD staff, the advisor would be responsible for the following:

1. Analysis of RDD accounting procedures.
 2. Verification of Coopers & Lybrand guidelines and adjustment of guidelines when necessary.
 3. Analysis of RDD payment procedures.
 4. Recommendations for change in RDD procedures.
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PROJECT ISSUES:

3. AID INVOLVEMENT WITH INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Although the progress to date under RDD's rural development operations has been minimal, it has attracted the attention of a number of potential international donors. The World Bank has provided a revolving mission which is looking at different aspects of what they call rural development (agricultural development); they indicate a willingness to discuss taking a number of regions under their auspices. The UNDP is obviously waiting until the socioeconomic survey is finished in Badakshan province before they enter the field (as distinct from rural works). The FAO is discussing new approaches to agricultural extension, plant protection and a variety of other agricultural activities, which if approved, would in all likelihood be operated under the auspices of RDD. Perhaps most important from the aspect of potential AID involvement, the Indian bilateral mission expects the arrival within the next three months of five additional Indian advisors with the following specialities:

- Agricultural extension;
- Animal husbandry;
- Cooperatives;
- Village industry/handicrafts; and
- Audio-visual aids (for the training center).

Mr. Mathur, whose two-year contract expires next February, is considering applying for the UN/RDD Economist/Planner position which is being advocated by the UNDP team, as part of their recommendations for an expanded rural works program.

Options for AID Involvement

If continuing with rural works as the major AID contribution to RDD (perhaps with an added fillip of minor irrigation systems) is not a viable alternative, then some direct assistance to a rural development effort will be required. Prior pages of this evaluation should have made clear that the two (Rural Works and RD) are only tangentially complementary, and as presently operated could, in some instances, be working in opposite directions. There is no reason to attempt to directly link the two, since rural works has a "hit and run" philosophy, while rural development is (or should be) an area-based development concept. Options for AID involvement in rural development with RDD could mean:¹

- Entering the fray at the national headquarters level, with the provision of a high level advisor to President Sediq.² The advisor would need a firm grasp of rural development, an understanding of priorities and selection criteria for project activities, and an underlying development philosophy which could be transmitted over time to RDD. This would

¹ One option not discussed but always available is no USAID participation in a rural development program in Afghanistan.

² Comment by Al Nehoda: "Assignment of such a person, must be considered carefully, and undertaken with great discretion. The Senior UN Engineer and to a lesser extent the chief of the Indian bilateral advisory team have considerable influence with President Sediq. One must be absolutely certain that, not only Sediq, but the UN and Indian teams would accept such a person. Advisory roles of the UN team leader and USAID high level advisor would have to be carefully defined."

provide a rationale and purpose for present and planned programs which currently are essentially different and unrelated activities conducted in the same area.

- Taking on a district as a pilot experimental project. The pilot project would attempt to develop a process by which district development can be implemented in many different areas in rural Afghanistan. While the proof of the plan would be found in real living standard changes in the AID district, the major and most important output of the undertaking would be a "how to do it" for the other districts which will enter the program.¹

We see no other reasonable points of interaction with RDD on rural development. The action will be in district development, and Afghanistan has a long history of dividing up territory and asking various donors to try their hand. Although it is an art form more than a science, AID should be able to produce the human and material resources which could make an impact over four or five years. And that impact would bring with it a process which could be used elsewhere for bringing the benefits of development to the rural poor. There are precious few other models to draw from² but it is a certainty that whatever the outcome of the AID experiment, it is bound to be more profitable for Afghanistan than Indian block development revisited.

¹ The lack of such a process approach and the problems of a solution-oriented approach are shown by action taken in Ghorband. If there are any results in Ghorband, the obvious conclusion will be that district development requires a micro hydro plant which produces both electricity and water, a main road from Kabul, a resettlement program, 40 kilometers of road and six Indian advisors. These are not the kind of findings which will be particularly useful in implementing rural development elsewhere in Afghanistan.

² See Appendix B, An Approach to District Development in Afghanistan, for one useful model.

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| RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE AID INVOLVEMENT IN INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT ¹ |
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We believe that to be effective USAID must both produce demonstrable and replicable results in at least one district development program and have a developer at the center (the national headquarters) who can serve as a high level advisor to RDD on development problems and approach. These are considered separately.

District Development

This would call for two American specialists, one essentially a field man with strong background in practical agriculture. By dividing his time 80 percent on the district development program and 20 percent on the minor irrigation systems, he could make an input into both projects. Since USAID at this writing has no direct contact with the Ministry of Agriculture, the man probably should be assigned to RDD. We would recommend complementing this man with 50 percent of the time of a local area specialist (such as the present USAID personal service contract advisor to RDD) who would operate the information systems -- socioeconomic surveys, data collection and analysis -- and monitor and evaluate the district project activities. The system he would use to establish baselines, experimental groups, controls and data collection instruments could be designed and tested by outside specialists.

¹ The following sections have the potential to sound self-serving, since DAI has been directly involved in designing district development programs for AID and in placing high-talent technical specialists in those projects. We do not believe we hold a monopoly on either good development concepts or exceptional human resources. On the other hand, if we knew of a better model for rural development, we would recommend it.

The Americans should be assisted by Afghan specialists from the University in the same way that the rural works program is adding technical assistance to its engineering staff. This will increase the impact of the American know-how and will allow a number of different activities to be undertaken at the same time. Provisions for integrating these specialists into future RDD projects should be considered early in the project design stage.

Technical assistance will not by itself generate rural development. However, combined with an approach which concentrates on maximizing the investment opportunities available for the local population to act in their own interest, and then setting about to demonstrate the benefits of that investment, the project can have an impact. It would need significant development resources, some commodity support, and the ability to draw upon outside specialists as knotty problems arose which were beyond local capability to overcome.¹ Obviously FAR is not appropriate.

Assistance to RDD Headquarters

The field workers in the district and their achievements can easily be obscured from the view of RDD as well as from that of national leadership. What is needed is a development specialist with Ph.D. credentials and overseas experience who can provide RDD with some conceptual understanding of the process of developmental change, and relate that process to actual projects and programs. No AID staff

¹ We cannot, at this time, design a district development project for RDD. Our experience in other countries suggests that this will consume approximately 9-12 man weeks by a three-man outside team assisted by AID. This involves selecting the area, determining the most profitable approaches viable local organizations, economic base, etc. However, the general approach is outlined in a separate paper on district development in Afghanistan -- see Appendix B.

direct-hire position should be asked to deliver this specialized talent.¹

The headquarters development specialist would also insure that RDD gave attention to the needs of the district development program, as well as assisting the Department to take advantage of lessons or approaches which have proven useful in the AID project.

AID Backstopping for a Rural Development Program with RDD

We believe that the rural works portion of RDD is moving forward at an acceptable pace, but will continue to do so only if staff attention is directed to the real problems of implementing FAR. The staff presently working on that portion of the project should probably continue to do so. A second project position, entitled district development, should be established to provide the administrative and policy backstopping necessary for an expanded and demanding program. This would provide two equally ranked officers, both supporting RDD, reporting to the head of the USAID Rural Development office.

The Special Problem of Ghorband

USAID has already made commitments to assist RDD with the rural development project at Ghorband. This project is using a solution-oriented approach to rural development which DAI has found to be ineffective in other parts of the world. Development activities

¹ In eight rural development projects which have come to our attention, the projects have provided from one to five contract specialists in this generalist, high-talent development field. This reflects AID's own direction in the placement and recruitment of personnel. The interaction necessary to work directly with host country personnel on a day-to-day basis leaves no time for the continual demands of the bureaucracy. The current trend is to separate the two functions, using the AID staff to provide policy guidance and support to an outposted specialist who complements the skills available in the local agency.

have already begun in Ghorband and to change the solution-oriented approach to a process-oriented approach at this late stage would be extremely difficult. It would also be difficult for USAID to establish process-oriented leadership for this project, as the Indian team which has played a substantial role in planning the projects has a continuing technical assistance commitment to Ghorband.

The USAID commitment to Ghorband consists of four subprojects, two of which can be financed under FAR and not with funds allocated to the integrated rural development experiment. These two subprojects -- rural works construction and rural school construction -- should continue as planned. The other two commitments should be examined to see if they cannot be transferred to another rural development region where a USAID-led process-oriented approach can be implemented. If the commitments cannot be transferred, they should be honored in Ghorband but no new commitments made to Ghorband. A new region (district) should be selected in consultation with the Rural Development Department and the Government of Afghanistan.

RDD as a Coordinating Agency

RDD has plans to be operational in all fields related to rural development and is already obtaining some of the personnel necessary to undertake such operations. This approach is analyzed on pages A-88-90, and DAI has made the following recommendation:

USAID should encourage RDD to abandon its plans to be the chief implementer in rural development, in favor of adopting the role of rural development planner and coordinator. It should be the implementer in those areas that complement and do not threaten ministerial functions and should actively encourage full participation by the ministries in rural development. USAID should provide an example by insisting on such an approach in USAID-supported rural development experiments. This assumption should remain in the project design and be monitored regularly.

III. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS OF THE RURAL WORKS COMPONENT OF RDD AGAINST ORIGINAL USAID PROJECT INTENT¹

SUMMARY: GOAL LEVEL ACHIEVEMENT

The goal of the project, as stated in the Logical Framework is: Expanded Rural Development Program (Phase II) implemented.

Goal level achievement could not be measured at the time of this evaluation which is occurring before the termination of Phase I. The purpose to goal hypothesis is examined and the potential for goal achievement is assessed in two sections of this evaluation: Purpose to Goal Assumptions, and Purpose Level Achievement.

SUMMARY: PURPOSE LEVEL ACHIEVEMENT

The Project purpose is stated as follows:

Social and economic benefits accrue to Phase I target population participating in RDD projects.

The Project's End of Project Status indicators describe the specific benefits that are to accrue to the target population:

1. One beneficiary of every \$20 investment
2. Benefit/cost ratio of 2:1
3. Increase in produce reaching markets
4. Five percent increase in production to water control beneficiaries

¹ This section summarizes material expanded upon in Appendix A.

5. Real farm income of all beneficiaries increased
6. Social services increased
7. Underemployment and unemployment reduced
8. Communities' savings and investment rate increased
9. Evidence of spread effect of project activities
10. Wheat yield and wheat yield equivalent increased seven percent
11. Increase in double cropping and higher value crops
12. Major share of benefits accrue to rural poor.

The project's output to purpose hypothesis is that if all of the outputs are achieved as planned and if all of the output to purpose assumptions are valid, then the purpose will be achieved. In this project, not only have the outputs not been achieved as planned but also four of the seven output to purpose assumptions were found to be not valid.

The evaluation team found no data available to measure purpose level achievement. Although the project effort to collect the necessary data has been minimal, this may well reflect a realistic understanding of the enormity of the task to obtain a modicum of reliable data. The socioeconomic survey was meant to supply information necessary to make decisions on selection of subprojects and also to provide some baseline data against which benefits from subprojects can be measured. The information in the socioeconomic survey has apparently been sufficient to meet decisionmaking needs for selection but provide no reliable data for evaluating benefits. However, subproject evaluations have yet to occur as they are due six to twelve months after subproject completion and no subproject was completed more than six months ago. The evaluations will be able to provide some information about benefits but only in a very rudimentary fashion.

It was clear in the Project Paper that the water control structures built by the project would bring increased or more consistent quantities of water to the farmers' fields. This water alone would result in only small increases in farm production but the water in turn would "encourage increased use of fertilizer (because of reduced risk and more water), second cropping and the introduction of higher value crops which consume more water." The evaluation team found that encouragement was not enough and that the farmer simply did not have access to the necessary agricultural inputs and technology to go beyond the benefit from just the water alone.

The target population of the project is the rural poor but there is no information regarding the economic status of those who are benefitted by the project. The evaluation team found no evidence that showed that roads and bridges would not in most cases benefit the rural poor. However, for water control structures there was some evidence that indicated the possibility of a negative effect on the rural poor. If the water control structures bring about a nationwide increase in wheat production which then decreases the price of wheat, the small farmer would be the first to experience a decreased return from his wheat production.¹

There has also been some doubt raised as to whether the water control structures built by the project will bring increased or more consistent quantities of water to the small farmer. The distribution of water is controlled by the elite of a village who may allow very little if any of the improved water supply to go to the small farmers.

The evaluation team recommends that water control structures as individual subprojects be phased out and replaced by minor irrigation system subprojects that can afford a more comprehensive pre-project socioeconomic survey and post-project evaluation.

¹ Comment by Al Nehoda: "This assumption is faulty. Firstly the incidence of RDD irrigation construction is not so wide-spread as to cause a nationwide increase in wheat production. Secondly, the 'small, rural poor' farmer is likely to be the primary consumer of his own production. He is lucky to have enough wheat for his own needs.

"Permanent irrigation structures in many cases will also help eliminate aspects of uncertainty with which the 'small rural poor' farmer is confronted. The sharecropper receives a specified portion of the crop he farms. He is indeed privileged to have any excess to sell at any price."

DAI response: As the discussion is limited to subsistence farming, with no purchased inputs, the above comments are correct. However, one thrust of the project should be to assist the modernization of agricultural production, which will likely call for purchased inputs. In such cases, the price elasticity for wheat is such that a 10 percent increase in average supply from all sources (including RDD and the Afghan fertilizer companies' efforts) will drive the price of wheat below the value of the inputs. This must be considered in any "development" as distinct from merely "rural works" undertakings.

SUMMARY: OUTPUT LEVEL ACHIEVEMENT

Overview

The project design has six outputs. Outputs 1 to 4 were to be achieved by RDD and USAID jointly. Outputs 5 and 6 were the sole responsibility of RDD. The outputs are as follows:

1. Water projects, bridges, roads constructed.
2. Rural works projects assessed and completed projects evaluated by planning and evaluation teams.
3. Training program established and functioning.
4. IRD program tested in three districts of three provinces by 7/77.
5. Policy for payment of unskilled labor on RDD projects established by 9/75.
6. RDD procurement procedures established by 9/75.

Not one of the outputs achieved its target for March 1976. One basic cause was too heavy a dependence on the FAR system which does not provide adequate inputs to achieve the level of performance expected. In this respect the input to output hypothesis was faulty. Of the planned inputs, both USAID and RDD failed to provide their full share. The input to output hypothesis was dependent on the validity of nine assumptions. Of these, five proved to be invalid.

Output 1 Summary

Water projects, bridges, roads constructed. There are seven indicators for this output:

- a. Eighty water control structures built by 7/77.
- b. Water reaches average of 375 acres per structure.
- c. Twenty-five bridges constructed by 7/77.

- d. Stone and concrete construction at average cost of \$14,000.
- e. 100 kilometers of farm-to-market roads improved by 7/77.
- f. Five mile wide, 15 cm gravel surface, drainage ditches both sides, average 2 culverts/km, year-round use.
- g. All above projects requested by rural local groups.

The March 1976 targets call for completion of 24 water control structures, eight bridges and 15 kilometres of road. Actual achievement was eight water control structures, three bridges and no roads. The reasons for the poor performance for water control structures and bridges are as follows:

- 1. Pilot Phase improvements were insufficient for FAR system to function smoothly.
- 2. CDE office was understaffed.
- 3. Local USAID engineers were not useful for reviewing designs.
- 4. No training for RDD design engineers.
- 5. Changeover in project management.
- 6. Conflicts among USAID project staff.
- 7. RDD confusion on FAR projects.
- 8. Ad hoc RDD procedures.
- 9. Conflicts within USAID on project strategy and objectives.

For road projects the main problems were (1) a misunderstanding in USAID on FAR procedures for roads, and (2) no RDD experience in building roads to USAID standards.

Output 2 Summary

Rural works projects assessed and completed projects evaluated by planning and evaluation teams. There are four indicators for this output:

- a. Planning teams assess all FAR proposed projects.
- b. Assessment includes economic and social data gathering and analysis of probable quality and quantity of benefits to accrue.
- c. Minimum 20 percent of projects completed are evaluated after completion by evaluation teams.
- d. Evaluation includes estimates of actual benefits and beneficiaries.

RDD did not provide the personnel for planning and evaluation teams as called for in the Project Agreement.¹ USAID personnel have been largely responsible for the socioeconomic survey work on 32 projects to date. The surveys identify probable beneficiaries but do not assess probable quality and quantity of benefits nor do they provide sufficient data to measure change at the time of projects' evaluation. The target date for evaluations has not yet been reached, and therefore no evaluations have been undertaken.

¹ Comment by Al Nehoda: "Previous USAID advisers to RDD supported the view that RDD should undergo a re-organization, which would bring an independent and strong planning section under the direct control of the RDD President. This section would be responsible for construction planning socioeconomic surveys and evaluation. Unfortunately these functions were already vested in three other sections of RDD. The Engineering Section had and still does have primary responsibility for construction planning; the Program and Planning Office, for socioeconomic data collection, and the Evaluation Office, for evaluations. The new planning office developed as an ad hoc liaison office for the USAID FAR program. It appears for every intent and purpose to be an expeditious concession to the relevant requirement in the Project Agreement. Its establishment has resulted not in the consolidation and strengthening of RDD's planning capability in a central office, but a factionalization of planning with no clear lines of authority. At present the Planning Section must seek approval for some of its activities from the Engineering Section, and for others from the Program and Planning Office.

"The status of the Planning Section was recently made official with the appointment of a supervisor and six staff. Two of the staff, shortly after appointment, left RDD. Only one of the remaining has had any training in the activities which the office will carry out. None of the remaining staff has appeared in the office officially."

Output 3 Summary

Training program established and functioning. There are six indicators for this output:

- a. Four accountants and four administrative personnel complete training in Teheran by 9/76.
- b. Fourteen RDD Directors and twelve local government officials observe RD programs and local government operations in two third-countries.
- c. Construction teams trained in administration and technical skills.
- d. Road improvement teams trained in administration and technical skills (five teams of ten each).
- e. Design Office personnel trained in office engineering skills.
- f. Planning and evaluation teams trained in data collection and analysis.

The project provided training for only four people to date. Of these, only one is in a position to use the skills he has learned. The USAID input provisions were inadequate for proper in-service and on-the-job training. Plans for participant training are progressing slowly.

Output 4 Summary

IRD program tested in three districts of three provinces by 7/77. There are two indicators for this output:

- a. Widespread participation of local people.
- b. Integrates mutually reinforcing development activities of rural works, adult education, health delivery, small agro-industries, cooperatives, and availability of agro-technology and credit.

The Project Paper identifies USAID as playing a key role in the development of a planning capacity within RDD to be applied to the rural development experiment and then in the planning of the experiment with RDD. The establishment of the planning capability was to be the precondition for designing

and implementing the experimental program. According to the Project Agreement, "The experiment may be implemented by a project agreement during U.S. fiscal year 1976." As described on pages 21-26, the planning and implementation for one experimental district is already underway, without the planning teams called for in the Project Paper, without the project agreement and without much input from USAID, which has taken a backseat to an Indian team of community development advisors. The result is a form of Indian block development which has had a very poor record elsewhere.

Output 5 Summary

Policy for payment of unskilled labor on RDD projects established by 9/75.¹

An official policy was in existence prior to Phase I.
The practice does not follow the policy.

Output 6 Summary

RDD procurement procedures established by 9/75.²

RDD had procurement procedures in existence prior to Phase I. No change in the procedures has been made to facilitate procurement of equipment.

¹ The indicators for this objective are clear within the objective as it appears in the Narrative Summary of the Logical Framework. See Appendix A.

² The indicators for this objective are clear within the objective as it appears in the Narrative Summary of the Logical Framework. See Appendix A.

ASSUMPTION SCOREBOARD

Purpose to Goal Assumptions

4. Small farmers have access to a technology, or have sufficient knowledge themselves to take advantage of additional water resources.
5. Small farmers have access to necessary agricultural inputs (e.g. fertilizer) to take advantage of additional water resources.
6. Road and bridge improvement will allow farmers to increase production.
7. State-of-the-art in the determination of social and economic benefits is sufficient to meet project selection criteria and evaluation needs.

Input to Output Assumptions

1. Local people want to participate in project identification.
2. FAR acts as incentive for RDD to perform well and at increasing rates.
3. Newly trained staff will not be transferred to other offices.
4. Staff turnover rate is not so great as to endanger continuity of RDD program.
5. Small farmers will have surplus labor time available and will be willing to offer it.
6. RDD capabilities developed in the Pilot Phase will be maintained in Phase I.
7. Contractors with required skills can be found and hired to meet schedule.
8. GOA has adequately trainable and/or qualified personnel to be assigned to RDD.
9. GOA will assign personnel to RDD on priority basis.

| Valid | Clear | Not Valid | Not Valid |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| | | | X |
| | | | X |
| X | | | |
| | | | X |
| | X | | |
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| | | X | |
| | | X | |
| | | | X |
| | | | X |
| | | | X |

SUMMARY: INPUT TO OUTPUT ASSUMPTIONS

The input to output hypothesis is that if the inputs are provided as planned, and the input to output assumptions are valid, then the outputs will be achieved. The input to output assumptions represent factors that are outside the control of project management. Nine assumptions have been identified and will be examined in some detail:

1. Local people want to participate in project identification.
2. FAR acts as incentive for RDD to perform well and at increasing rate.
3. Newly trained staff will not be transferred to other offices.
4. Staff turnover rate is not so great as to endanger continuity of RDD program.
5. Small farmers will have surplus labor time available and will be willing to offer it.
6. RDD capabilities developed in the Pilot Phase will be maintained in Phase I.
7. Contractors with required skills can be found and hired to meet schedule.
8. GOA has adequately trainable and/or qualified personnel to be assigned to RDD.
9. GOA will assign personnel to RDD on priority basis.

Of these nine assumptions only two (numbers 1 and 3) have been found to be valid. The emphasis on the use of the FAR system as the major project vehicle for achieving project success has proven to be a serious weakness in the project design (invalidity of assumption 2). The other major weakness in the project is input to output assumptions related generally to insufficient manpower in terms of both quantity and quality (invalidity of assumptions 4, 7, 8 and 9). Two other assumptions were not clearly valid or invalid. The outputs were not achieved as planned and to a large extent, causality can be attributed to the five assumptions that proved to be invalid.

SUMMARY: OUTPUT TO PURPOSE ASSUMPTIONS

Social and economic benefits will accrue to the rural target population (the PURPOSE of the project) if RDD builds rural works which were requested by the rural target population. This hypothesis is based upon a set of assumptions -- important issues which were not made an explicit part of the project which underlie the original project design. Seven assumptions have been identified and will be examined in some detail:

1. The rural population is capable of identifying projects which benefit them.
2. The local power elite will not frustrate widespread benefit incidence.
3. Small farmers will seek to increase production for additional income and/or food consumption.
4. Small farmers have access to a technology, or have sufficient knowledge themselves to take advantage of additional water resources.
5. Small farmers have access to necessary agricultural inputs (e.g. fertilizer) to take advantage of additional water resources.
6. Road and bridge improvement will allow farmers to increase production.
7. State-of-the-art in the determination of social and economic benefits is sufficient to meet project selection criteria and evaluation needs.

Of these seven assumptions four (numbers 2,4,5 and 7) were found to be invalid with the three remaining assumptions valid. The major constraints to purpose achievement that were uncovered in the analysis of assumptions are (1) benefits to the small farmer cannot be assured by production of the project outputs alone, and (2) the cost of obtaining information on benefits to the small farmer will be more than originally envisaged and the information obtainable will be less than adequate to have full confidence that the small farmers are benefitting as planned.

SUMMARY: PURPOSE TO GOAL ASSUMPTIONS

The purpose to goal hypothesis is that if the purpose is achieved, and the purpose to goal assumptions are valid, then the goal will be achieved.

The purpose to goal assumptions represent factors that are outside the control of project management. Ten assumptions have been identified and will be examined in some detail:

1. GOA is genuinely committed to rural development.
2. Accelerated output performance by RDD will instill sense of accomplishment to fuel further acceleration and improvement.
3. Resources are available to make full support goals feasible.
4. GOA endorses local participation in rural project decisions.
5. RDD High Council and Council of Presidents will function on a permanent basis.
6. Tribal and local loyalties will not impede implementation of RDD Charter.
7. Inter-ministerial conflicts will not impede implementation of RDD Charter.
8. RDD projects other than FAR-funded achieve success equal to FAR projects.
9. Other donor contributions to RDD remain stable or increase.
10. AID continues to place priority on rural development.

Of these ten assumptions, four (numbers 1, 5, 9 and 10) were found to be valid and four (numbers 3, 4, 7 and 8) were found to be invalid. For two other assumptions (numbers 2 and 6), there was not enough evidence to conclude one way or the other. The major constraints to goal achievement that were

uncovered in the analysis of assumptions are (1) RDD does not have the skilled manpower resources necessary for an expanded program, and (2) support from relevant ministries necessary for integrated rural development remains questionable.

The evaluation team found a general willingness among interviewees to proceed to an expanded program if the project outputs were achieved, regardless of whether achievement of purpose can be substantiated. The purpose appears to be more an assumption between the outputs and goal, rather than the essence of the project and a precondition for an expanded program. The essence of the project purpose appears to be a specific rate of expansion of RDD construction capacity.¹ The benefits to small farmers are assumed between the achieved rate of expansion and the expanded program. The benefits then reappear as a higher order objective, meaning those benefits that accrue from the expanded program.

¹ The IRD program is more benefit oriented and so different in nature from the rural works program that the evaluation team recommends making these two programs separate projects (see p. 41).

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A: EVALUATION OF PROJECT INTENT

The original Logical Framework was drawn up hurriedly after the Project Paper was written by people who had minimal training and experience in developing Logical Frameworks. The result was a Logical Framework that was not usable as one tool for the evaluation.¹ One of the first steps of the evaluation team was to develop a new Logical Framework that attempted to reflect the original intent of the project designers. One of the persons who played a key role in the original design of the project, Mr. Charles Johnson, was in the process of transferring to another post when the DAI team arrived in Kabul but was available to work with the team on developing the revised Logical Framework. The Logical Framework represents or should represent the essence of the original intent and does so to the degree that views and information that were important to the designers were made available to the evaluation team.

¹ A Logical Framework provides for neither the strongest nor the most conclusive evaluation methodology. As is the case in the Rural Works Project, significant differences between Logframe targets and progress toward targets can be attributable to a poor set of target indicators rather than poor project performance.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK – Rural Works Project – Phase 1

| NARRATIVE SUMMARY | OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS | ASSUMPTIONS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------|--|--------------|------------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|-------------------|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|-------------|----------------------------|------|------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|--------------|-----|----------|-----------------|------|-------|--|--------|---|
| GOAL Equal Rural Development Program (Phase 1) Implementation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> RSD established \$2,000,000 for emergency F&B projects. RSD continues to implement 50% of private sector F&B loans. | HIGHER ORDER OBJECTIVES Assumed under imp of development program established and existing to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Attract private investment into the implementation of development effort. Expand and diversify access to resources to the villages of Afghanistan. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PURPOSE Build and strengthen local's services to Phase 2 target population participating in RSD projects. | END OF PROJECT STATUS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One beneficiary for every 500 of households. Benefit/loss ratio of 2:1. Services to produce profitable margins. 75% increase in production to meet annual household needs. Good farm income of all beneficiaries reached. Good service network. Order employment and unemployment reduced. Communities savings and investment rate increased. Existence of support effort of project activities. Wheat yield and wheat yield objectives increased 75%. Services to double cropping and higher value crops. Major share of benefits returned to rural poor. | POSSIBLE TO GOAL ASSUMPTIONS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ODA is generally committed to rural development. Assumed major performance by RSD will benefit access of beneficiaries to the various opportunities and improvements. Beneficiaries are available to make full support good benefits. ODA continued level participation in rural development. RSD High Council and Council of Ministers will continue as a permanent body. Tribal and local facilities will not impact implementation of RSD Charter. Local-influenced committee will not impact implementation of RSD Charter. RSD projects other than F&B based income sources equal to F&B projects. Other donor organizations to RSD remain active or improve. ODA continues to place priority on rural development. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| OBJECTIVES <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Water projects, bridges, roads constructed. Rural water projects constructed and completed projects achieved in planting and structure loans. Training activities established and functioning. 200 projects listed in 2 Chapters of 3 Divisions to 1/77. Policy for payment of essential labor in RSD projects completed by 1/77. RSD performance parameters established by 1/77. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 60 water control structures built by 1/77. Water facilities average of 275 acres per structure. 23 bridges constructed by 1/77. Save and improve structures to average size of \$1,500 per bridge. 100 tons of fertilizers/pesticides applied by 1/77. Build new 5 concrete tanks, 15 m³ or ground water, or village design both sides, average 1 structure per beneficiary and complete performance. All above projects completed by rural local groups. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Planting loans issued and repaid by 75% of positions received. Assessment technical assistance and control data gathering and analysis of production quality and quantity of benefits to farms. Minimum 95% projects completed are completed other activities by activities loans. Evaluation technical assistance of small benefits and beneficiaries. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4 technologies and 4 administrative personnel complete training by February 1/77. 14 RSD Divisions and 12 local government officials complete RSD programs and local government representatives in two local meetings. Commitment letters issued to administrative and technical staff. Good improvement letter issued to administrative and technical staff, as directed to PM. Change office personnel trained to office engineering staff. Change letter and administrative letter issued to data activities and regions. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer participation of local people. Long-term training/extension development experience of rural youth, village committees, health delivery, animal agriculture, agriculture, and sustainability of rural technology services. | OBJECTIVE TO GOAL ASSUMPTIONS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The rural population is capable of benefiting private sector growth plans. The local private sector will not provide infrastructure benefits to beneficiaries. Local farmers will not be overburdened by additional taxes and/or land requirements. Local farmers have access to a satisfactory, or more satisfactory technology to meet needs of agricultural development. Local farmers have access to necessary agricultural inputs (e.g., fertilizers) to use advantage of additional water resources. Good and timely improvement will allow farmers to increase production. Technical assistance in the administration of rural and economic benefits to farmers to meet private sector growth and economic needs. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| OBJECT ACTIVITIES <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> RSD activities project to prepare for F&B loans. ADP resources RSD programs and various projects for F&B loans. RSD performance projects. ADP resources project to implement and monitor RSD (F&B). Performance activities of project. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continued planning and evaluation office in RSD. Private groups performed. Continued performance for project implementation. RSD planning local areas proposed projects. RSD performance local areas proposed projects. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support ADP training officer. Build RSD training office. Established RSD training center. Plan and implement ADP training programs. Plan and implement ADP training programs. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ODA Division 4 Division of 4 Divisions. 1 primary service support technical data to Divisions. RSD & USAID training staff. Private technology center 3 Divisions. Planning and evaluation Divisions for local needs. Planning and evaluation Divisions for local needs. Planning and evaluation Divisions for local needs. RSD performance projects. | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>RESOURCES</th><th colspan="2">FUNDING (mill)</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="2">1. BARGHOFER</td><td>- 1 A.L.S. Engineering</td><td>1.28</td></tr> <tr> <td>- 2 Third Country Engineering</td><td>1.28</td></tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">2. LEAD PERSONNEL</td><td>30 man/month</td><td>1.8</td></tr> <tr> <td>30 man/month</td><td>1.8</td></tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">3. TRAINING</td><td>- Third Country Short Term</td><td>1.28</td></tr> <tr> <td>- Third Country Observations</td><td>2.1</td></tr> <tr> <td>4. FIELD OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE</td><td>14 man/month</td><td>2.1</td></tr> <tr> <td>5. OTHER</td><td>- Support Costs</td><td>1.16</td></tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td><td></td><td>11.549</td></tr> </tbody> </table> | RESOURCES | FUNDING (mill) | | 1. BARGHOFER | - 1 A.L.S. Engineering | 1.28 | - 2 Third Country Engineering | 1.28 | 2. LEAD PERSONNEL | 30 man/month | 1.8 | 30 man/month | 1.8 | 3. TRAINING | - Third Country Short Term | 1.28 | - Third Country Observations | 2.1 | 4. FIELD OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE | 14 man/month | 2.1 | 5. OTHER | - Support Costs | 1.16 | TOTAL | | 11.549 | OBJECT TO OBJECTIVE ASSUMPTIONS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Local people want to participate in project implementation. F&B will be available for RSD to perform and not in financing role. Locally trained staff will not be overburdened by other effort. Local farmers will not be overburdened by other effort. Local farmers will have access to the RSD projects and will be willing to offer it. RSD implementation development to the RSD Plan will be continued to Phase 2. Continued with improved staff and to local need to local need. ODA has necessary resources and/or qualified personnel to be assigned to RSD. ODA will assign personnel to RSD as priority basis. |
| RESOURCES | FUNDING (mill) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. BARGHOFER | - 1 A.L.S. Engineering | 1.28 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 3. TRAINING | - Third Country Short Term | 1.28 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | - Third Country Observations | 2.1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 5. OTHER | - Support Costs | 1.16 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | 11.549 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

I: GOAL LEVEL ACHIEVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the project, as stated in the Logical Framework is:

Expanded Rural Development Program (Phase II) implemented.

SUMMARY

Goal level achievement could not be measured at the time of this evaluation which is occurring before the termination of Phase I. The purpose to goal hypothesis is examined and the potential for goal achievement is assessed in two sections of this evaluation: Purpose to Goal Assumptions and Purpose Level Achievement.

II: PURPOSE LEVEL ACHIEVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Project purpose is stated as follows:

Social and economic benefits accrue to Phase I target population participating in RDD projects.

The Project's End of Project Status indicators describe the specific benefits that are to accrue to the target population:

1. One beneficiary of every \$20 investment.
2. Benefit/cost ratio of 2:1.
3. Increase in produce reaching markets.
4. Five percent increase in production to water control beneficiaries.
5. Real farm income of all beneficiaries increased.
6. Social services increased.
7. Underemployment and unemployment reduced.
8. Communities' savings and investment rate increased.
9. Evidence of spread effect of project activities.
10. Wheat yield and wheat yield equivalent increased seven percent.
11. Increase in double cropping and higher value crops.
12. Major share of benefits accrue to rural poor.

SUMMARY

The project's output to purpose hypothesis is that if all of the outputs are achieved as planned and if all of the output to purpose assumptions are valid, then the purpose will be achieved. In this project not only have the outputs not been achieved as planned but also four of the seven output to purpose assumptions were found to be not valid.

The evaluation team found no data available to measure purpose level achievement. Although the project effort to collect the necessary data has been minimal, this may well reflect a realistic understanding of the enormity of the task to obtain a modicum of reliable data. The socioeconomic survey was meant to supply information necessary to make decisions on selection of subprojects and also to provide some baseline data against which benefits from the subprojects can be measured. The information in the socioeconomic survey has apparently been sufficient to meet decisionmaking needs for selection but provide

no reliable data for evaluating benefits. However, subproject evaluations have yet to occur as they are due six to twelve months after subproject completion and no subproject was completed more than six months ago. The evaluations will be able to provide some information about benefits but only in a very rudimentary fashion. The assessment of output to purpose assumption seven deals at length with the problem of measuring benefits.

It was clear in the Project Paper that the water control structures built by the project would bring increased or more consistent quantities of water to farmers' fields. This water alone would result in only small increases in farm production but the water in turn would "encourage increased use of fertilizer (because of reduced risk and more water), second cropping and the introduction of higher value crops which consume more water." The evaluation team found that encouragement was not enough and that the farmer simply did not have access to the necessary agricultural inputs and technology to go beyond the benefit from just the water alone (see assessments of assumptions four and five).

The target population of the project is the rural poor but there is no information regarding the economic status of those who are benefitted by the project. The evaluation team found no evidence that showed that roads and bridges would not in most cases benefit the rural poor. However, for water control structures there was some evidence that indicated the possibility of a negative effect on the rural poor. If the water control structures result in a nationwide increase in wheat production which then decreases the price of wheat, the small farmer would be the first to experience a decreased return from his wheat production' (see assumption four for more detail).

There has also been some doubt raised as to whether the water control structures built by the project will bring increased or more consistent quantities of water to the small farmer. The distribution of water is controlled by the elite of a village who may allow very little if any of the improved water supply to go to the small farmers.

The evaluation team recommends that water control structures as individual subprojects be phased out and replaced by minor irrigation system subprojects that can afford a more comprehensive pre-project socioeconomic survey and post-project evaluation.

¹ See comment by Al Nehoda on this point in Section III, page 70.

III: OUTPUT LEVEL ACHIEVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The project design has six outputs. Outputs 1 to 4 were to be achieved by RDD and USAID jointly. Outputs 5 and 6 were the sole responsibility of RDD. The outputs are as follows:

1. Water projects, bridges, roads constructed.
2. Rural works projects assessed and completed projects evaluated by planning and evaluation teams.
3. Training program established and functioning.
4. IRD program tested in three districts of three provinces by 7/77.
5. Policy for payment of unskilled labor on RDD projects established by 9/75.
6. RDD procurement procedures established by 9/75.

SUMMARY

Not one of the outputs achieved its target for March 1976. One basic cause was too heavy a dependence on the FAR system, which does not provide adequate inputs to achieve the level of performance expected. In this respect the input to output hypothesis was faulty. Of the inputs that were planned, both USAID and RDD failed to provide their full share.¹ The input to output hypothesis was dependent on the validity of nine assumptions. Of these, five proved to be invalid. Causality for poor output performance is analyzed in detail on the pages that follow and in the section on input to output assumptions.

¹ Input level activities and resources are not analyzed as a separate category within the project design but are included within the analysis on output achievement when important to the discussion.

OUTPUT 1: WATER PROJECTS, BRIDGES, ROADS CONSTRUCTED

There are seven indicators for this output:

- a. 80 water control structures built by 7/77.
- b. Water reaches average of 375 acres per structure.
- ~~c. 25 bridges constructed by 7/77.~~
- d. Stone and concrete construction at average cost of \$14,000.
- e. 100 kilometers of farm-to-market roads improved by 7/77.
- f. Five-mile wide, 15 cm gravel surface, drainage ditches both sides, average 2 culverts/km, year-round use.
- g. All above projects requested by rural local groups.

Summary

The March 1976 targets call for completion of 24 water control structures, 8 bridges and 15 kilometers of road. Actual achievement was eight water control structures, three bridges and no roads. The reasons for the poor performance for water control structures and bridges are as follows:

1. Pilot Phase improvements were insufficient for FAR system to function smoothly.
2. CDE office was understaffed.
3. Local USAID engineers were not useful for reviewing designs.
4. No training for RDD design engineers.
5. Changeover in project management.
6. Conflicts among USAID Project staff.
7. RDD confusion on FAR projects.
8. Ad hoc RDD procedures.
9. Conflicts within USAID on project strategy and objectives.

For road projects the main problems were (1) a misunderstanding in USAID on FAR procedures for roads, and (2) no RDD experience in building roads to USAID standards.

Logical Framework Target:

- 1.a. 80 water control structures built by 7/77.
- b. Water reaches average of 375 acres per structure.

March 1976 Target

- 1.a. 24 water control structures built.
- b. Water reaches average of 375 acres per structure.

Actual Achievement, March 1976

- 1.a. Eight water control structures; and in addition:
11 proposed water control structures have Letter of Intent; seven of these have CDE review of RDD design completed; four of these have FAR Agreement signed.
- b. No measurement of acres reached by water from completed structures has been made.

Causality

The Pilot Phase of the Rural Works Project had increased the capability of RDD to survey, design and construct water control structures. This improvement during the Pilot Phase was evident to most of the people interviewed (CDE, RD, DP, President Sedig).¹ The Project Paper describes the Pilot Phase accomplishments in part as follows:

3. RDD cost estimating procedures have been significantly improved
4. Uniform design and construction standards and specifications have been developed by USAID, UN and RDD engineering personnel and are being gradually incorporated into all RDD projects

¹ An exception was Al Nehoda who felt that the Pilot Phase had no influence at all, and saw no difference between FAR and non-FAR projects with the small number of projects that have been completed. Interview, May 2, 1976.

5. RDD construction has improved significantly¹

Although RDD did make progress in the Pilot Phase, the improvements were still not enough to allow the FAR system to function smoothly. In the early months of Phase I there were no projects approved for FAR funding, as the quality of designs submitted to AID by RDD was still not up to an acceptable level. According to one CDE engineer, "We had a very difficult time trying to find just one drawing that met our minimum criteria."² RDD was submitting designs of projects for which construction was due to begin while CDE was sending the proposals back to RDD for redesign. The designs were going back and forth between USAID and RDD without approvals.³

During this period the CDE office was understaffed. A request for two U.S. engineers TDY for the summer construction months was not filled and the CDE office had to work with only two U.S. engineers and three local engineers. The local engineers were adverse to criticizing designs that were done by RDD and already approved by President Sediq so that they were not very useful for reviewing the PDD proposals.⁴ The two Americans had a heavy workload with other Mission business (the Central Helmand Drainage Project had been given highest priority) and could give only a small portion of their time to the rural works projects.⁵ There were no engineering resources available to give technical training to the RDD design engineers to upgrade the quality of designs.

It was only in October-November that designs started to be approved and FAR Agreements signed. It was already the end of the summer construction season. The winter construction season was about to begin but only six provinces have construction teams during the winter. This evaluation takes into account activity through March, the end of the winter construction season.

Another reason for project delays was the changeover in project management. A new Senior Project Advisor, Joseph Salzburg, came on board in August 1976. Salzburg could not

¹ Project Paper, page 40.

² Interview with Brent Gatch, May 26, 1976.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

become fully operational until after the necessary period for orientation to RDD and the project activities. Some of the project staff from the Pilot Phase were still with the project, and project operations were not scheduled for a slowdown.¹ Salzburg's views on project strategy and his management style differed considerably from the former project manager.² These changes were not quickly accepted by the remaining project staff who apparently favored the views and style of the former project manager under whom they had been working. Conflicts developed among the project staff.³ RDD was getting different signals from the various staff members and was confused as to what USAID expected of it, both in regard to procedures for FAR approval and in regard to performance.⁴ RDD procedures for planning, design, approval and implementation were ad hoc and changed from month to month and from province to province.⁵ This made it even more difficult to establish proper coordination between RDD and the USAID Project.

The UN advisor to RDD, George Glaister, has been successful in initiating some procedural improvements for RDD operations. This includes a new system of planning in which projects are selected and designed and priorities set for implementation prior to the construction season in which they will be implemented.

Within the USAID Mission there were sharp differences of opinion regarding project strategy and objectives.⁶ The project appeared to suffer as the various parties spent time attacking and defending their positions. (See pp. 49-50 for further examination of this problem.)

No water control structures built in Phase I have been evaluated as the evaluations are scheduled for six to twelve months after completion of construction and this time period has yet to elapse. The socioeconomic studies attempt to

¹ Phase I was planned to connect directly with the Pilot Phase and the changeover in phases came during the summer construction period when the project was most active.

² This was the opinion of everyone interviewed who knew both men and also the opinion of Mr. Salzburg.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Information supplied by Barnett Chessin.

⁵ Interview with Mr. Ismael of RDD, May 5, 1976.

⁶ This became very evident to the evaluation team during interviews with USAID personnel.

estimate the amount of land served by the water control structures, and in most cases the estimates were in terms of thousands of acres rather than in hundreds of acres. There is little to no reliable information, however, on the increased benefits to be derived from the completed structures.¹ The project intent (as communicated to the evaluation team) was simply to bring about increase in traditional agricultural production with improvements in the irrigation systems.² It is stated in the Project Paper as an objective of the project that "A major share of the benefits will accrue to the rural poor."³ Some doubts have been raised as to whether small-scale water control structures (RDD does not build large scale structures) provide significant benefit to the small-scale farmer if the only project activity is the construction of the structures.

Prognosis

The improved planning system in RDD recently developed by George Glaister will improve RDD's ability to implement projects and will also facilitate coordination between RDD and USAID. RDD is planning to build 40 water control structures during the present summer construction season and is expected to

¹ The socioeconomic survey questionnaire supplied very little information on economic conditions within the project villages and what information exists is not quantified to allow for measurement of that change.

² There is some conflict of opinion regarding this issue. It is apparent that the project was not designed to actively bring more than just increased or more consistent water flow to those benefitting from the improved irrigation systems. The Project Paper states:

"Improved irrigation structures result in increased production. They encourage increased use of fertilizer (because of reduced risk and more water), second cropping and the introduction of higher value crops which consume more water. These factors all increase opportunities for the productive, remunerative use of the communities' labor, reducing underemployment and unemployment." (pages 42 and 43)

The Project Paper uses as an example of an irrigation project a flum construction project in Ghazniqak village which "may be typical of the irrigation projects that will be financed." The PP states:

"With the increased irrigation water supply it is likely that more double cropping will be done, more fertilizer will be used and higher value crops that consume more water will be planted."

A clear distinction apparently needs to be made between what the project was actively promoting and would be accountable for (increased or more consistent water supply) and what benefits were expected to accrue from the project without any direct further involvement of the project.

³ Project Paper, page 34.

complete about 26.¹ Ten water control structures are expected to be completed during the winter construction season. With the planned increase in RDD capacity next year, the number of completed projects during the 1977 summer construction season could be 30 or more. Phase I terminates halfway through the summer season. Of the 51 projects estimated to be completed by July 1977, FAR can reasonably be expected to fund about 18 to 25. Therefore, the minimum acceptable target for the total number of water control structures reimbursed by FAR during Phase I is 26.

The target of water reaching an average of 375 acres per structure will be surpassed.

Recommendations

1. Water control structures as individual projects should be phased out and replaced by projects that deal with total minor irrigation systems and include comprehensive socioeconomic analysis and strategies to bring benefits to the small farmers.

2. USAID should hire a contract engineer (two man-months) to examine USAID/RDD design standards and construction specifications in light of possible adjustments to make them more appropriate to the Afghan environment.

✓ 3. USAID should restructure the FAR procedures to bring them more in line with the new RDD planning procedures.

4. The CDE construction monitoring staff (local engineers) should be brought on board as quickly as possible and rotated in key provinces where they will have easy access to project sites.

5. A local engineer should be hired by USAID and given special training to qualify him to train assistant technicians and technicians in formal courses and to give on-the-job training and assistance to RDD staff.

? 6. FAR Agreements should not need to be signed before construction work starts but rather before a critical point in the construction is reached as determined by USAID engineers.

¹ George Glaister has made the estimation that RDD will be able to complete only 50 of the 77 projects RDD has planned to complete. Water control structures represent about 52 percent of the total.

7. Payments for unskilled local labor and for local materials should be eliminated from FAR Agreements for all water control structures, thereby making the key criterion for project selection the availability of voluntary local unskilled labor and materials. If such labor and materials are promised but do not materialize, the project should be dropped from FAR funding.

Logical Framework Target

- 1.c. 25 bridges constructed by 7/77.
- d. Stone and concrete construction at average cost of \$14,000.

March 1976 Target

- 1.c. 8 bridges constructed.
- d. Same as Log Frame Target.

Actual Achievement March 1976

- 1.c. 3 bridges completed; and in addition: 10 proposed bridges have Letter of Intent; 4 of these have FAR Agreement signed.
- d. All completed bridges built of stone and concrete. Average estimated cost of bridges completed: \$16,271 @ 54 afs/dollar. Average estimated cost of eight bridges with cost estimates: \$14,281.

Causality

Delays in construction of bridges were generally due to the same causes as the delays in the construction of water control structures.

A brief socioeconomic survey should be able to ascertain whether a bridge is to benefit a large number of small farmers. There is little need for detailed socioeconomic surveys in cases where bridges are being built along roads connecting villages to market towns. The major question for bridges is who will benefit (how many households, how many villages)?

Prognosis

An increase in the rate of construction of bridges can be expected from improvements in RDD procedures, increased staff and an increase in the amount of equipment available.

RDD completed 13 bridges in the twelve months from March 1975 to March 1976.¹ Thirty-seven bridges are planned for construction between March and November 1976. RDD should be able to complete about 24 of these. In addition, RDD should complete about ten bridges during the months November 1976 to March 1977.² Another fifteen should be completed by July 1977.³ Of the 49 bridges that RDD should be able to complete between March 1976 and July 1977, FAR can reasonably be expected to fund about 16 to 25. Therefore, the minimum acceptable target for the total number of bridges reimbursed by FAR during Phase I is 19.

The average cost for bridges through July 1977 should be between \$12,000 and \$14,000.

Recommendations

Recommendations two through six for water control structures are also applicable to bridges. In addition, the criterion for selection of bridges that are within the territory of a village and specifically benefit the people of the village should be the willingness of the local people to volunteer their labor to construct the bridge. This will help assure that the project will not benefit just a few local people or households. Such a bridge should use only voluntary labor for all unskilled labor needs.

For bridges falling outside the territory of a single village and built to benefit many villages, the criterion for selection should be the number of villages that will benefit from the bridge. Such a bridge need not use voluntary labor for its unskilled labor needs.

¹ RDD statement showing achievement in 1354.

² George Glaister has made the estimation that RDD will complete about 50 projects during the summer construction season and another 20 during the winter construction season. Bridges represent about 48 percent of the total.

³ RDD is planning a total of 75 projects for the summer of 1977 and it would be reasonable to estimate that 60 could be completed with bridges again comprising about 48 percent of the total.

Logical Framework Target

- 1.e. 100 kms. of farm-to-market roads improved by 7/77.
- f. 5m wide, 15cm gravel surface, drainage ditches both sides, average 2 culverts/km, year-round use.

March 1976 Target

- 1.e. 15 kms farm-to-market roads improved.

Actual Achievement

- 1.e. No roads improved.
3 road projects have received a Letter of Intent (a total of 33 kms for the 3 projects together).
- f. Not available.

Causality

After the Letters of Intent were issued, CDE engineers made site visits and found that construction work on these roads had already started. According to FAR procedures, construction work cannot begin until after the FAR Agreement is signed. Since the discovery of the work in progress, conflict has reigned within the Mission over whether USAID can support a project for which construction has already begun. ✓

If the intention is to pay RDD for work already completed, this would clearly be in conflict with the FAR procedures requiring RDD/USAID agreement on the estimated costs before work commences. However, if USAID is paying for the cost of improvements to the work already completed, then there would be no conflict as the cost estimations can be agreed upon before the work commences. The USAID intention has not been clarified.

The RDD staff within each province plans and undertakes its own road construction activities. No pre-construction design work has been done for the relatively primitive roads that have been constructed. Once the course of the road is laid out, construction plans are made on almost a day-to-day basis with the construction supervisors working out a plan for each 100 to 200-meter span as it comes along. The construction teams consist of several hundred paid local unskilled

laborers and a local foreman. The RDD construction supervisor will give instructions to the foreman for the next span and visit the construction site periodically to check on the work. The earth moving is done almost entirely by hand tools and with almost no major equipment involved; the main cost of the project is the cost of the local labor. This labor cost has been borne by WFP.¹

Most of the road construction has been accomplished during the winter months when local labor is plentiful and the RDD office is not occupied with construction of bridges and water control structures which are considered summer construction activities for most of Afghanistan's provinces. RDD/Kabul expects to have 300 kilometers of road constructed between March 1976 and March 1977.

The quality of the roads now being constructed is below current USAID standards. The Parsa Road, visited by the evaluation team, was barely passable by jeep and could certainly not support the trucks and buses that would be needed if the road were to benefit the villages linked by the road to a market town. The Parsa Road is one of the three that have had a Letter of Intent from USAID. It is reasonable to expect that there are hundreds of kilometers of RDD-constructed roads in need of improvement. An assessment of the average quality of RDD roads has not been undertaken. It is not known whether RDD has the capacity to build better quality roads.

Prognosis

A coordinated RDD/USAID program of assistance to help build RDD road improvement capabilities will allow road improvement work to be undertaken in a number of different provinces during the winter months (November to March). At least 50 kilometers should be completed by July 1977.

Recommendations

The three road projects for which Letters of Intent have been issued should be undertaken as road improvement projects and the cost estimates should include only that work that is necessary to upgrade the roads from their current state to USAID standards.

¹ RDD road construction information provided by Messrs. Ismael and Azimi of RDD.

USAID engineers should work together with RDD engineers to develop a rate schedule for man-days/kilometer for different types of terrain and soil in order to facilitate cost estimates. USAID should hire a contract engineer (two man-months) to examine USAID/RDD design standards and construction specifications in light of possible adjustments to make them more appropriate to the Afghan environment. Finally, USAID engineers should meet with RDD staff to examine the potential within RDD to design and construct roads to AID standards. Constraints should be examined and USAID should give assistance as needed (e.g., a formal training seminar, advice to design engineers).

Logical Framework Target

- 1.g. All above projects requested by rural local groups.

March 1976 Target

- 1.g. Same as Logical Framework.

Actual Achievement March 1976

- 1.g. Sufficient evidence was not available to have confidence that all projects undertaken to date were requested by rural local groups. The evidence suggests that most of the projects were requested by rural local groups.

Causality

Large numbers of requests from rural local groups flow into the RDD Province offices located in twenty provinces of the country. The RDD Director in Nangahar Province reported about 300 requests over the last seven months. The RDD Director in Herat Province reported a backlog of 500 requests. The RDD General Director in Parwan Province told the evaluation team that he has received about 100 requests over the last year.

The requests appear to be genuine. Most of the requests are accompanied by a page or more of thumbprints identifying the individual farmers in the group making the request. Although many RDD projects are initiated in response to these requests, there are exceptions to this -- e.g., projects undertaken for political reasons. President Sediq told the evaluation team that he does respond to political requests but that he would not ask that such projects be included in the AID program. Another exception is rural works relating to heavy vehicle transportation which would include most roads and some

bridges. RDD officials explained that the roads cut across cultivated land and small farmers fear that they will lose their land to the road.¹ RDD will perceive the need for a road and then work with the villagers to help them understand and accept the road project.

There is no clear information on how the requests are generated within the villages. RDD has a long history, and many farmers are acquainted with RDD services. Some small farmers may ask the village Malik (usually a literate villager chosen by the village power structure to interface with government officials and other outsiders) to write up the request. It is also possible that a Malik or a wealthy landowner who sees personal benefit from an RDD project pressures the villagers to put their thumbprints on the request.²

Prognosis

With an expansion of the RDD rural works program more of the rural population will become aware of the availability of RDD services either through the media or by word of mouth. Given the large number of requests already piled up in RDD offices and the inability of RDD to respond to these requests, an increase in the number of requests is not necessary to meet demands of the AID project.

¹ Comment by Al Nehoda:

"Where a feeder road benefitting a single village cuts through cultivated land of that village, the problem is strictly a matter for the benefitting village to decide.

✓ | "The problem becomes extremely more complex where a feeder road serves large up-road villages but must cut through agricultural lands of a down-road village which will not benefit from traffic. In such cases the necessary decisionmaking is beyond the scope of RDD's responsibility."

² Comment by Al Nehoda:

"That this has happened in the past and will happen in the future is clear. But incidence of such power plays are so rare as to be insignificant. Unfortunately there is subconscious almost paranoid preoccupation on our part with influence-wielding. We do not openly recognize the influence peddling which goes on around as continually in our own cultural context, but too eagerly point the finger at the culprit in another culture. Where it serves our purposes we entrust millions in the hands of profiteers, but trust no one with a few hundred thousand. This is not to say that judicious administration is expendable. However, one must infer that there is a distrust along every step of the way from the U.S. Congress to the Afghan "rural poor" - a sad state of affairs indeed."

Recommendations

It will be necessary to continue on site checks to see that requests from groups of villagers for projects under consideration as FAR projects will benefit small farmers and not just a Malik or large landowner who may have generated the request.

Flexibility must be allowed for road and bridge projects that can be judged by RDD/USAID as a priority need for a village or group of villages but were not initiated in response to requests from these villages. These projects should not be forced upon villagers. If farmers do not accept the project and remain unwilling to give up the necessary land for construction, the project should not be FAR-funded.

Projects with clearly identified beneficiaries who themselves can immediately appreciate the benefits (this would include all water control projects and some bridges projects) should be initiated only in response to requests from the local beneficiaries.

OUTPUT 2: RURAL WORKS PROJECTS ASSESSED
AND COMPLETED PROJECTS EVALUATED BY
PLANNING AND EVALUATION TEAMS

There are four indicators for this output:

- a. Planning teams assess all FAR-proposed projects.
- b. Assessment includes economic and social data gathering and analysis of probable quality and quantity of benefits to accrue.
- c. Minimum 20 percent projects completed are evaluated after completion by evaluation teams.
- d. Evaluation includes estimates of actual benefits and beneficiaries.

Summary

RDD did not provide the personnel for planning and evaluation teams as called for in the Project Agreement.¹ USAID personnel have been largely responsible for the socioeconomic survey work on 32 projects to date. The surveys identify probable beneficiaries but do not assess probably quality and quantity of benefits nor provide sufficient data to measure change at the time of projects' evaluation. The target date for evaluation has not yet been reached, and therefore no evaluations have been undertaken.

Logical Framework Target

- 2.a. Planning teams assess all FAR proposed projects.
- b. Assessment includes economic and social data gathering and analysis of probable quality and quantity of benefits.

March 1976 Target

- 2.a. 36 projects analyzed.
- b. Same as Logical Framework.

Actual Achievement March 1976

- 2.a. 32 projects have had some degree of social and economic analysis.
- b. Assessments to date have included information on the general nature of expected benefits, the estimated number of beneficiaries, and for some projects an approximate number of hectares to be served by the completed water control structure. The methodology used for data gathering was not well-developed and little analysis was done on quality and quantity of benefits. There was no reliable empirical data gathered against which actual achievement can be measured.

¹ See comment by Al Nehoda on this point in Section III, p. 73.

Causality

The Project Agreement of May 31, 1975 states, "The Government of Afghanistan agrees that sixteen (16) graduates of the Faculties of either Agriculture, Economics or Law will be appointed to RDD for training and assignment on Planning and Evaluation Teams..."¹ The Project Paper targets 16 Planning personnel and eight Evaluation personnel assigned to RDD by September 1975. Eight planning teams were to be functioning by January 1976.² To date only seven persons have been added to the RDD staff to provide for planning function.³

The RDD Planning Office was unofficially formed in June 1975⁴ and had two planning teams, each made up of one Faculty of Economics graduate and one Faculty of Agriculture graduate. The teams made field trips with USAID personnel for on-the-job training,⁵ using newly developed data collection questionnaires. In February 1976 two of these four people were transferred out

¹ Project Agreement, May 31, 1975, page 2.

² Project Paper, pp. 30-31.

³ The seven full-time members of the Planning Office staff have the following backgrounds: three Agriculture, two Technical, one Economics and one Education. The Office also has three engineers (including the Acting Chief) and one clerk assigned parttime. Participation on socio-economic survey teams (for FAR-proposed projects) represent only a small part of the responsibilities of the Planning Office staff. Of the seven full-time staff members, only one has had on-the-job training by USAID project staff.

⁴ Official status came in May, 1976.

⁵ Training was not a formal part of the planning team operation. Whatever training occurred was due to the presence of the RDD staff members while the USAID staff members undertook the survey. (According to Al Wehoda in an interview May 29, 1976).

of the Planning Office.¹ The two USAID personnel who did the original socioeconomic survey development, David Garner and

¹ Comment by Al Nehoda:

"There is a great deal of confusion as to what constitutes the Planning Office, who is or was in it, who was or is trained, what that training consisted of, etc.

"The 'Planning Office' was unofficially formed in June 1975. Since it was an official entity, it had no staff of its own, but was assigned staff from other sections on a temporary basis. The original temporary assignment consisted of:

1. Eng. Ismail Qadiri, Engineering Section
2. Sayyid Azim Qaran, Economist, from the Program and Planning Office
3. M. Yusuf, Economist, from the accounting section
4. M. Kahir, Agriculturist, from the Agriculture Section.

"These four staffers received informal 'learn as you go' training from prior USAID advisors. It appears that with the exception of Eng. Ismail, none of the staffers made independent socioeconomic surveys for FAR projects. The brunt of the FAR surveys were carried out by AID advisors, both of whom informed me that with the exception of Eng. Ismail none of the others could carry out the survey work independently.

"After an initial trip to Farah and Uruzgan Provinces with Nawroz and Ismail, I felt that part of the reason that the surveys could not be done by the others was that they were conducted with no guidelines as to which people and which places to 'sample'.

"After the summer 1976 program was established by the Engineering Section, I asked RDB to provide four people who would be trained in conducting more complete surveys within a more limited 'frame'.

"Sayyid Azim Qaran and M. Yusuf, mentioned above, were selected as experienced 'hands' and Mir Aqa and M. Qaseem, from the Agriculture Section were selected and 'trainees'. The first trip proved a success insofar as the trainees became familiar with the survey forms, were able to interview, understood in which places and whom to interview. I also came to realize that the existing form was riddled with deficiencies and that too much was expected of the surveys as a whole. Nevertheless, I felt that the surveys were a requirement and should be continued and improved. Preparations were then made for a second trip. I naively expected to have the same crew of surveyors on this trip also. Unfortunately Sayyid Azim was not available for this trip and the two new trainees were not selected. In their place only M. Kahir was assigned. Kahir, also previously mentioned, had been on a temporary leave of absence. He indicated that he was seeking a one-year leave of absence and would not be able

Mohammad Nedar Nowrouz, left USAID in January and February 1976, respectively. The two original Planning Office staff members who remained received a second round of on-the-job training when Al Nehoda took over from Messrs. Nowrouz and Garner. Of these two, one was not assigned to the permanent Planning Office as of May 1976. The Acting Chief of the Planning Office is also the Chief Construction Engineer for the Logar Province RPD Office and spends only two days each week on planning responsibilities. RDD has not met its obligation to supply planning staff as stipulated in the Project Agreement.

The filling out of Social and Economic data sheets apparently has become common practice in RDD. The sheets are filled out for all RDD projects but given the lack of trained staff available to undertake this function, it represents no more than just a perfunctory chore given to RDD Directors to provide more detail on projects they are proposing. President Sediq told the evaluation team, "Every RDD project has to have a socioeconomic survey because we are not interested in helping private individuals or companies."² The evaluation team found no evidence that socioeconomic information supplied on the FAR forms or RDD data sheets, other than the estimated number of beneficiaries, was used for project selection either in RDD or USAID.

The DAI evaluation team examined 18 completed FAR survey forms.³ On all forms information was provided on the number of people interviewed and the villages in which interviews were held.

to go along on the second trip. It was not until the morning of departure that Kabir was replaced by Mir Aqa. The second round of SE surveys were made with only two people. The third trip also included only two surveyors - this time still another combination. And a fourth trip planned for the week of June 26 will have a fourth combination. The lack of a permanent staff has made any sort of training impossible. I was pleased to hear that in April the Planning Section was recognized officially and was assigned a permanent staff of seven. Unfortunately the assignments have not yet materialized and M. Yusuf, who was one of the mainstays of the section was not among those assigned."

¹ Interview with Mr. Ismael, Acting Chief of the Planning Office, April 25, 1976....

² Interview with President Sediq, May 10, 1976.

³ These were used for projects that were proposed by RDD for FAR funding and were the only ones in this category that were in English.

For each survey form it is not clear how many people were interviewed. The form calls for identification of those interviewed and we can assume that the major informants are listed. However, it is possible that a number of other people were standing around and participated to some degree in the discussions.

Examination of the 13 surveys showed that only five of them were fully completed, 10 were only about half completed and three provided almost no information.

Al Nehoda identifies the difficulties with the forms as follows:

- I. Lack of definition of a sample (How many interviews are to be completed? Who is to be interviewed?).
- II. Form at
 - A. Lack of consistency.
 - B. Large percentage of questions which depend on subjective reporting of the interviewer.
- III. Lack of specific direction in questions.
 - A. Objectives of questions are not clear or the answer cannot be stated on concise or objective terms.
 - B. Lack of standardization in phrasing.
 - C. Compacting (important questions are addressed only as a part of other questions).¹

DAI supports Nehoda's findings.

In the Project Paper it was stated that "A Planning Team will gather economic and social data on each project by a two to three-week site visitation..."² The planning teams spend no more than one day at a site and usually part of the day is spent traveling to and from the site.³

¹ Memorandum from Al Nehoda to Joseph Salzbürg, Senior Project Advisor, May 8, 1976.

² Project Paper, page 12.

³ Nehoda interview, May 29th.

Prognosis

Al Nehoda is prepared to revise the socioeconomic survey forms used for proposed FAR projects and then train the newly assigned members of the Planning Office in survey techniques.¹

Recommendations

Socioeconomic surveys should be scheduled to closely follow the preliminary RDD site visits.² ~~RDD is sending preliminary survey teams to six sites in each province one year before the~~

¹ Nehoda worked with Dr. Donald Jackson of DPI to revise the socioeconomic survey form used for bridge projects.

² Comment by Al Nehoda:

"As mentioned previously socioeconomic surveys are presently being conducted by the engineering teams visiting proposed Winter/Summer 1977 project sites. It is perhaps RDD's intention to complete the surveys in this fashion and be done with them. However, I feel that it is very important, that if any surveys are conducted at all, they be done in a controlled and responsible manner. They should be done by groups of 'trained' surveyors who are intimately familiar with the materials and methodology involved -- both the strong points and weaknesses -- and who are able to collect whatever data is required with some semblance of unity, cohesiveness, and coherence.

Given the difficulty of data collection in general, the variety of projects and the small sample size in particular, it is futile to expect that a revised set of survey forms used indiscriminately will produce any better results.

In light of the DAI evaluation some basic decisions concerning surveys to be taken by both USAID and RDD. These include:

1. Which of the proposals concerning surveys does AID accept?
2. Which of the proposals concerning surveys will RDD accept?
3. Will surveys be used by RDD in the preselection of all sites or only for FAR projects?
4. Will there be a regular staff at RDD (Planning Section) for conducting the surveys?
5. How will the information collected in the surveys be evaluated -- to what end and by whom?
6. What will be the relationship between the socioeconomic surveys and a sub-project evaluation?

Unless basic agreement is reached on the above, the surveys will continue to represent wasted RDD time, material, and human resources."

construction is due to begin. These survey teams gather enough information to allow RDD to choose three of the six sites. The socioeconomic survey teams should undertake their surveys in the three selected sites of each province soon after the preliminary survey and before design work begins.

Brief one-day surveys should be conducted for bridge and water control structures and extensive surveys built into an information system should be used for minor irrigation system projects and rural development projects.¹

Logical Framework Target

- 2.c. Minimum 20 percent projects completed, evaluated six to twelve months after completion.
- d. Evaluation includes estimates of actual benefits and beneficiaries.

March 1976 Target

- 2.c. Twelve projects evaluated.
- d. Same as Log Frame Target above.

Actual Achievement March 1976

No project evaluations have been undertaken.

Causality

The delay in approving FAR projects meant also a delay in completing FAR projects. Six months has not yet elapsed since the first Phase I FAR project was completed.

¹ Comment by Al Nehoda:

"It is my hope that a socioeconomic survey will not be used simply to justify AID participation in an RDD pre-selected MIS project, but that it will be used as a pre-selection criteria both by RDD and USAID -- a means to select the 'best' among many.

"If and when outside contractors are hired to draw up guidelines on AID involvement in IRD and MIS a full-time RDD staffer should be assigned to work with them during the duration of their stay."

Prognosis

The project evaluations will be very difficult, if not impossible to do well, due to the lack of baseline data. There will be no way to accurately measure change without knowing what the conditions were before the project was implemented. The planning teams spent on average less than one full day at each project site¹ when the Project Paper called for a two to three-week site visit.² The Project Paper calls for the evaluation teams to spend four to six weeks on a site visit.³ The benefits to be derived from such a long site visit are not worth the effort without having sufficient baseline data available.

Recommendations

For bridges (those that meet the criteria for using only voluntary unskilled labor - see p.A-14) and water control structure (not minor irrigation systems), evaluations should be conducted over a period of not more than one to two days on site.

The evaluation should assess whether the structure is functioning in the manner it was planned to function, whether the structure will remain sound, and if the target population is receiving the planned benefits (in whatever rudimentary fashion the benefits were indicated in the pre-project socioeconomic survey).

The evaluation should be undertaken at the time of year in which the benefits can be most easily observed and/or when the structure can be observed in full operation.

The evaluation team should consist of the Rural Works Project Rural Development Advisor (Al Nehoda), a USAID engineer, an RDD engineer and a member of the RDD planning staff.

Given the small number of projects that will be completed in Phase I, the target of projects evaluated should be 50 percent.

For minor irrigation systems an intensive evaluation should be made and the design for this evaluation should be developed in conjunction with the information system for both MIS and IRD.

Roads and bridges (those built under the same criteria as ones that should use paid unskilled labor - see p.A-14) should be evaluated only in respect to their structural soundness.

¹ Interview with Mr. Al Nehoda, May 29, 1976.

² Project Paper, p. 12.

³ Ibid.

OUTPUT 3: TRAINING PROGRAM ESTABLISHED AND FUNCTIONING

There are six indicators for this output:

1. Four accountants and four administrative personnel complete training in Teheran by 9/76.
2. Fourteen RDD Directors and 12 local government officials observe RD programs and local government operations in two third countries.
3. Construction teams trained in administration and technical skills.
4. Road improvement teams trained in administration and technical skills (five teams of ten each).
5. Design office personnel trained in office engineering skills.
6. Planning and evaluation teams trained in data collection and analysis.

Summary

The project provided training for only four people to date. Of these, only one is in a position to use the skills he has learned. The USAID input provisions were inadequate for proper in-service and on-the-job training. Plans for participant training are progressing slowly.

Logical Framework Target

- 3.a. Four accountants and four administrative personnel complete training in Teheran by 9/76.
- b. Fourteen RDD Directors and 12 local government officials observe rural development programs and local government operations in two third countries.

March 1976 Target

- 3.a. Four personnel trained.
- b. 0

Actual Achievement March 1976

3.a. 0 personnel trained.

b. 0

Causality

An examination of the cost of an observational study tour showed that the tour would be more costly than originally envisaged.¹ Discussions with RDD President Sediq indicated that officials targeted for participant training in Teheran would not be made available. Those available were lower ranking staff with engineering backgrounds.² It was decided by USAID that the project money would be better spent on the observational tour than for training people who did not meet USAID selection criteria.³ The number of trainees accepted for participant training in 1976 was dropped from four to two thereby freeing funds to provide full budgetary support for the observational tour. The two RDD officials scheduled for training in Teheran are due to depart shortly.

The observational tour was planned for Malaysia, a country with a good rural development program to observe. But the Government of Malaysia refused to plan the tour with U.S. government officials and suggested that GOA embassy officials in Teheran contact the Malaysian embassy there to discuss such a tour. GOA officials have yet to indicate their willingness to initiate discussions with the Malaysian officials in Teheran.⁴

The Government of Iran has agreed to receive an observational study group in Teheran for two weeks.⁵

Most of the people interviewed by the evaluation team expressed the opinion that the observational study tour was valuable, not for what the participants would learn, but rather for the psychological impact that could be expected from (1) seeing the results of good rural development planning and implementation, and (2) being favored for a trip outside Afghanistan. The tour was expected to inspire the officials to work harder for rural development objectives.

¹ Interview with Al Nehoda, May 29, 1976.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Prognosis

Two RDD personnel will be trained in Teheran in 1976.

Recommendations

USAID should not set a target for training RDD personnel in Teheran in 1977 until an assessment of the first such training experience is made.

If the GOA does not take the initiative to work out an observational tour with the Government of Malaysia, USAID should accept to limit the tour to Iran and use the money saved for the training program recommended on page A-32.

Logical Framework Target

- 3.c. Construction teams trained in administration and technical skills.
- d. Road improvement teams trained in administration and technical skills (five teams of ten each).

March 1976 Target

- 3.c. Four construction teams trained.
- d. Four improvement teams trained.

Actual Achievement March 1976

- 3.c. 30 technicians trained in technical skills.
- d. No road improvement teams trained.

Causality

In the Project Paper it was intended that the U.S. contract Team Leader would "design and implement in-service and on-the-job training...."¹ The position of Team Leader was never filled, and the Rural Works Project does not have a staff member to undertake these tasks.

The UN Senior Advisor to RDD and his staff as well as some German volunteers have developed a training program, and the German volunteers have taught at the RDD Training Center.²

¹ Project Paper, p. 23.

² Interview with George Glaister, Senior UN Advisor to RDD, April 30, 1976.

The objective of the first training course was to give practical training to 60 RDD engineers and Afghanistan Institute of Technology graduates who had received a technical education based mainly on theory; many were not capable of doing even simple tasks such as surveys and drafting.¹

Prognosis

The United Nations is planning a program to train 60 assistant technicians by March 1977. Forty-six of these will be trained in construction while nine will be trained in survey techniques and five in drafting.² According to Glaister,

"The people who will instruct the new RDD assistant technician, will be UN and German volunteers. The trainers are qualified in their technical field but are not well-versed in training techniques and methodology...all the volunteers receive language training but the volunteers who will train assistant technicians will not be able to communicate well and will need interpreters."³

The UN training program is being planned through March 1982 and will reach a total of 191 trainees (assistant technicians) over six years.⁴

The UN is planning to send engineers and technicians for training abroad. Eighty-five fellowships are proposed totalling 684 man-months, of which 240 man-months will be for engineers, 180 for construction technicians and the remainder for other RDD functions (e.g., management, community development).⁵

The UN program does not include the development of an RDD capacity to train its own staff. The plan gives mention to RDD counterparts to the volunteers and recommends that technically qualified and experienced RDD personnel be assigned part-time to work as instructors.⁶ There is no provision in the UN plan

¹ Ibid.

² A Proposal for the Provision and Training of Civil Engineering Technicians to Carry out the Programs in the 7-Year Plan 1355-1361, prepared by George Glaister (no date on document), p. 3.

³ Glaister interview, April 30.

⁴ Glaister Proposal, p. 3

⁵ Request from the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan to the United Nations Development Programme for Technical Assistance, Training and Equipment in Support of the Rural Development Department, a draft document prepared by Glaister, March 1976, pp. 14-15.

⁶ Glaister Proposal, p. 4

for development of curriculum and the training of instructors in training techniques and methodology.

Recommendations

USAID should request the United Nations to plan an RDD training program with USAID participation so that each organization can complement the other's inputs without duplication or serious gaps in the program.

USAID should provide a U.S. Training Advisor (six man-months) to develop curriculum and training methodology for in-service and on-the-job training, and to train (1) an Afghan engineer to work as USAID Training Advisor to RDD and (2) RDD instructors.

USAID should hire an Afghan senior engineer (at or near retirement) to work as a full-time Training Advisor to RDD for in-service and on-the-job training of RDD engineers, technicians, assistant technicians and village workers.

Logical Framework Target

- 3.e. Design Office personnel trained in office engineering skills.

March 1976 Target

- 3.e. Two courses completed.

Actual Achievement March 1976

- 3.e. No training has been given to Design Office personnel.

Causality

USAID has had no input into the development of design training. In the past there were no permanent design engineers. The RDD engineers would shift as needed from construction to design to survey work. However, functional divisions in RDD are now stabilizing and those who will be assigned to design work can be identified for training.

Prognosis

The training will be undertaken under the auspices of a combined RDD/USAID/UN/German Voluntary Service training program.

Recommendations

Same as on page A-32.

Logical Framework Target

- 3.f. Planning and evaluation teams trained in data collection and analysis.

March 1976 Target

- 3.f. 16 planning personnel trained, four evaluation personnel trained.

Actual Achievement March 1976

- 3.f. Four planning personnel have received informal on-the-job training.

Causality

No formal training program for planning and evaluation personnel has been developed. The Project Agreement envisaged such training occurring at the RDD Training Center.¹ During the early part of project implementation (until January 1976), David Garner and Heidar Nowrouz, both of the USAID Rural Works Project staff, undertook socioeconomic studies in the company of RDD officials who, by observing the two USAID personnel, indirectly received training in survey techniques. In this fashion four RDD staff members were trained.²

RDD has not assigned personnel to the Planning Office in the numbers agreed to in the Project Agreement (see pages A-21-23).

Al Nehoda took over from Messrs. Garner and Nowrouz in January 1976, and continued to give training to two of the four people who had already undergone some training. Of these two people who remained with the Planning Office, one is leaving for a one year's leave of absence. Thus, of four people trained, only one remains with the Planning Office.³

¹ The Project Agreement reads:

"C. Training: The Government of Afghanistan agrees that an Office of Training will be established in RDD with appropriate staff and a suitable training center will be located in which RDD staff can be trained in social and economic data collection and analysis, project evaluation.... (p. 3)

² Interview with Al Nehoda, May 29, 1976.

³ Ibid.

Prognosis

Nehoda is planning to start a more formalized training of six new members of the Planning Office. They will be given some classroom instruction in survey techniques before going out to the field for on-the-job training.¹ Without knowing how many more people RDD will assign to the Planning Office or how many of those assigned will be transferred from the Planning Office, it is difficult to speculate on how many trained staff the Planning Office will have by July 1977.

Recommendations

USAID should encourage RDD to stabilize the RDD planning staff so that those trained will be available to do the work for which they have been trained.

OUTPUT 4:

IRD PROGRAM TESTED IN THREE DISTRICTS OF THREE PROVINCES BY 7/77

There are two indicators for this output:

- Widespread participation of local people;
- Integrates mutually reinforcing development activities of rural works, adult education, health delivery, small agro-industries, cooperatives, and availability of agro-technology and credit.

The integrated rural development component of this project has been dealt with as a special issue in a separate section of this evaluation (pp. 61-67).

Summary

The Project Paper identifies USAID as playing a key role in the development of a planning capacity within RDD to be applied to the rural development experiment and then in the planning of the experiment with RDD. The establishment of the planning capability was to be the precondition for designing and implementing the experimental program. According to the Project Agreement, "The experiment may be implemented by a project agreement during U.S. fiscal year 1976." The planning

¹ Ibid.

and implementation for one experimental district is already underway, without the planning teams called for in the Project Paper and without much input from USAID which has taken a back-seat to an Indian team of community development advisors. The result is a form of Indian block development which has had a very poor record elsewhere.

OUTPUT 5:

~~POLICY FOR PAYMENT OF UNSKILLED LABOR ON RDD PROJECTS ESTABLISHED~~ BY 9/75

(The indicators for this objective are clear within the objective as it appears in the Narrative Summary of the Logical Framework.)

Achievement

An official policy was in existence prior to Phase I. The practice does not follow the policy.

Causality

This output represents a responsibility of the GOA as part of its obligations as stipulated in the Project Agreement of May 21, 1975:

"Policy: The Government of Afghanistan agrees that a clear policy will be enacted for the payment of unskilled labor on RDD projects, including road improvement construction, by September 30, 1975."

The ProAg clause was prompted by USAID's belief that conscripted labor was used on RDD projects. According to Charles Johnson, "In the past, labor for road construction was always conscripted."¹ The Project Paper states, "Unskilled labor has always been voluntary, conscripted or paid with food."² The evaluation team found that conscripted labor was not used on RDD projects (see pages A-45-49). The USAID intention was to encourage payments to unskilled laborers to avoid the risk of conscripted labor, with the result that voluntary contributions of labor were not encouraged (the thinking was that an outsider could not tell the difference whether voluntary or conscripted labor was being used).

¹ Interview with Charles Johnson, May 1, 1976. Johnson was one of the individuals responsible for designing the project.

² Project Paper, p. 42.

RDD does have an official policy of not allowing payment for local unskilled labor and there is no budget allocation to cover unskilled labor costs.¹ But a number of loopholes in this policy allow a quite different unofficial policy to dominate -- i.e., unskilled laborers are paid on special "government" projects which allows RDD to supplement the World Food Program and FAR labor payments not covering 100 percent of the daily wage.² Assistance from foreign donors for payments to unskilled laborers is welcomed by RDD, as paid labor facilitates construction (laborers work harder, longer hours). The result is that 95 percent of RDD projects use only paid unskilled labor.³

The availability of voluntary labor is necessary for extensive rural development but the local people whose labor will be needed will not work for free once they have grown accustomed to being paid for labor on projects that directly benefit them (see pages A-45-49) for more detailed discussion of this subject).

Prognosis

A policy that encourages payment for all unskilled labor neglects the benefit of voluntary labor and creates an environment that will impede future growth in areas that depend heavily on voluntary labor.

Recommendations

FAR projects should not include payments to local unskilled laborers who will be directly benefitting from the projects. USAID should encourage RDD to maintain a similar policy on all of its projects.

OUTPUT 6: RDD PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY 9/75

(The indicators for this objective are clear within the objective as it appears in the Narrative Summary of the Logical Framework.)

¹ According to President Sediq, interview April 29, 1976.

² Ibid., George Glaister, the UN Senior Advisor to RDD, in an interview May 10, 1976, said that the money for RDD supplements to unskilled laborers probably comes from the budget for skilled labor.

³ Memorandum from Barney Chessin to Alan Roth, May 9, 1976. All but one of the FAR Agreements contain payments to local unskilled laborers.

Achievement

RDD had procurement procedures in existence prior to Phase I. No change in the procedures has been made to facilitate procurement of equipment.

Causality

This output represents a responsibility of the GOA as part of its obligations as stipulated in the Project Agreement of May 31, 1976:

"Equipment: The Government of Afghanistan agrees that appropriate procedures will be established and in force for RDD to procure necessary equipment which requires expenditure of foreign currencies by September 30, 1975."

Procedures exist for RDD to procure necessary equipment which requires expenditure of foreign currencies, and it has already procured considerable quantities of equipment from abroad, despite antiquated and troublesome GOA procurement procedures.

Prognosis

Procurement procedures appear to be deeply imbedded in GOA regulations that will not be changed by a Project Agreement for a small project nor by any actions of RDD as a single agency.

Recommendations

USAID should assist RDD procurement by (1) making small commodity purchases for RDD that are necessary for quick, stop-gap measures to overcome small equipment bottlenecks, and (2) helping RDD contract with an international purchasing agent to make large commodity purchases with its FAR dollars.

IV. ASSUMPTION SCOREBOARD

PURPOSE TO GOAL ASSUMPTIONS

| | Valid | Clear | Not Valid | Not Valid |
|---|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. GOA is genuinely committed to rural development. | X | | | |
| 2. Accelerated output performance by RDD will instill a sense of accomplishment to fuel further acceleration and improvement. | | X | | |
| 3. Resources are available to make full support goal feasible. | | | X | |
| 4. GOA endorses local participation in rural project decisions. | | | X | |
| 5. RDD High Council and Council of Presidents will function on a permanent basis. | X | | | |
| 6. Tribal and local loyalties will not impede implementation of RDD Charter. | | X | | |
| 7. Interministerial conflicts will not impede implementation of RDD Charter. | | | X | |
| 8. RDD projects other than FAR-funded achieve success equal to FAR projects. | | | X | |
| 9. Other donor contributions to RDD remain stable or increase. | X | | | |
| 10. AID continues to place priority on rural development. | X | | | |
| OUTPUT TO PURPOSE ASSUMPTIONS | | | | |
| 1. The rural population is capable of identifying projects which benefit them. | X | | | |
| 2. The local power elite will not frustrate widespread benefit incidence. | | | X | |
| 3. Small farmers will seek to increase production for additional income and/or food consumption. | X | | | |

4. Small farmers have access to a technology, or have sufficient knowledge themselves to take advantage of additional water resources.
5. Small farmers have access to necessary agricultural inputs (e.g. fertilizer) to take advantage of additional water resources.
6. Road and bridge improvement will allow farmers to increase production.
7. State-of-the-art in the determination of social and economic benefits is sufficient to meet project selection criteria and evaluation needs.

INPUT TO OUTPUT ASSUMPTIONS

1. Local people want to participate in project identification.
2. FAR acts as incentive for RDD to perform well and at increasing rates.
3. Newly trained staff will not be transferred to other offices.
4. Staff turnover rate is not so great as to endanger continuity of RDD program.
5. Small farmers will have surplus labor time available and will be willing to offer it.
6. RDD capabilities developed in the Pilot Phase will be maintained in Phase I.
7. Contractors with required skills can be found and hired to meet schedule.
8. GOA has adequately trainable and/or qualified personnel to be assigned to RDD.
9. GOA will assign personnel to RDD on priority basis.

| Valid | Clear | Not Valid |
|-------|-------|-----------|
| | | X |
| | | X |
| X | | |
| | | X |
| | | X |
| X | | |
| | | X |
| | X | |
| | X | |
| | | X |
| | | X |
| | | X |

A. INPUT TO OUTPUT ASSUMPTIONS

Introduction

The input to output hypothesis is that if the inputs are provided as planned, and the input to output assumptions are valid, then the outputs will be achieved.

The input to output assumptions represent factors that are outside the control of project management. Nine assumptions have been identified and will be examined in some detail:

1. Local people want to participate in project identification.
2. FAR acts as incentive for RDD to perform well and at increasing rate.
3. Newly trained staff will not be transferred to other offices.
4. Staff turnover rate is not so great as to endanger continuity of RDD program.
5. Small farmers will have surplus labor time available and will be willing to offer it.
6. RDD capabilities developed in the Pilot Phase will be maintained in Phase I.
7. Contractors with required skills can be found and hired to meet schedule.
8. GOA has adequately trainable and/or qualified personnel to be assigned to RDD.
9. GOA will assign personnel to RDD on priority basis.

Summary

Of these nine assumptions only two (numbers 1 and 3) have been found to be valid. The emphasis on the use of the FAR system as the major project vehicle for achieving project success has proven to be a serious weakness in the project design (invalidity of assumption 2). The other major weakness in the project is input to output assumptions related generally to insufficient manpower in terms of both quantity and quality

(invalidity of assumptions 4, 7, 8 and 9). Two other assumptions were not clearly valid or invalid. The outputs were not achieved as planned and to a large extent, causality can be attributed to the five assumptions that proved to be invalid.

1. Local People Want to Participate
in Project Identification

Findings

RDD initiates many projects in response to local requests. There is no clear information on how the requests are generated within the rural villages (see pages A-17-18 for more detail).

A process has not yet been developed in RDD for its staff to make contact at the village level with more than the village Malik. It is the Malik's function to interface between the villagers and the government. According to Louis Dupree, "The Malik is the village's first line of defense."¹

For integrated rural development projects, which require a more extensive and more in-depth participation of villagers in project identification than for rural works projects, RDD is experimenting with a system by which full-time village workers elicit requests for rural development projects from the local population. From interviews with these workers the evaluation team learned that villagers in the selected villages are participating in the identification of rural development projects. The requests far outstrip the number of rural development projects or subprojects that RDD can undertake. The villagers have yet to meet all together with RDD officials to set priorities.²

President Sediq hopes to make use of unofficial village councils (jirgas) as forums for problem-solving; the councils, which were outlawed following the 1973 coup, exist in most villages and Sediq expects them soon to be reinstated.³ The Malik will consult the jirga for key decisions regarding cooperation on RDD projects.⁴

¹ Interview with Louis Dupree, May 14, 1976.

² Visit to Ghorband area, May 16, 1976.

³ Interview with President Sediq, May 10, 1976.

⁴ Orientation seminar for DAI evaluation team, comments by Al Nehoda, April 20, 1976.

Conclusions

If requests submitted to RDD are in fact requests from groups of villagers (and not just the request of a Malik or a wealthy landowner), this would indicate an interest on the part of the villagers to participate in project identification. Considering the great number of local requests submitted to RDD, the lists of signatures attached to these requests and the experience of the village workers, the assumption is probably valid. Villagers' ability to participate is limited by their system of defense to protect themselves against outsiders and by their suspicion that government officials represent danger to them.

Recommendations

For both integrated rural development projects and minor irrigation system projects, every attempt should be made to (1) demonstrate that RDD officials are working with the villagers to bring real benefits to the village, and (2) communicate directly with the villagers and participate in village council meetings in order to maximize local participation and facilitate the setting of priorities for development.

2. FAR Acts as Incentive
for RDD to Perform Well and at Increasing Rate

Findings

This subject is dealt with as a special project issue in Section II, Project Issues, pp. 44-60.

Conclusions

This assumption was found to be invalid.

Recommendations

USAID should provide technical assistance and commodity assistance to complement the FAR system in order for RDD to perform effectively and at an increasing rate.

3. Newly Trained Staff
Will Not be Transferred to Other Offices

4. Staff Turnover Rate is not so Great
as to Endanger Continuity of RDD Program¹

Findings

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) handles entry into the Afghan civil service. It does not have authority to transfer people out of RDD once they are under the employ of RDD, except in emergency situations such as a state of war.²

President Sediq has control over transfer out of RDD and within RDD. He told the evaluation team that he will transfer people if they are not fit for their job or if they have a great aversion to it. Last year he fired a total of 10 to 12 people. A civil servant is allowed to request a transfer every two years but the government is under no obligation to make the transfer.³ Of the senior staff interviewed by the evaluation team, most of them have been with RDD for five to ten years and some longer.

President Sediq told the evaluation team that he would like to leave his job to go to the United States to work on a Ph.D. and then take a position as a professor at Kabul University. When asked if this would happen soon, he replied that it is not his decision to make but rather the decision of President Daoud.⁴ Sediq has just recently been convicted in two courts for illegally profiting from the import of some government supplies.⁵ The

¹ Comment by Al Nehoda: "Technically this is true and the constraints for transfer within and out of RDD are superficially as stated in the report. However, a system of 'unofficial transfers,' seconding, or TDY does, in fact, exist. Virtually all of the people who have worked in the Planning Section have been TDY assigned. Now that the Planning Section has received official recognition, most those who have been officially assigned to it are on TDY to their original sections."

² Interview with President Sediq, April 29, 1976.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Information supplied by Al Nehoda.

evaluation team heard many rumors, some suggesting that he is being pushed out of office while others suggesting that he will be solidifying his position in office with a presidential pardon.

Most people interviewed respect Sediq's ability to handle his job. He does not have ministerial rank (his rank is equal to deputy minister), and although he does have the ear of the Prime Minister, he may not have the political strength to be a forceful coordinator of rural development.¹ Sediq is an engineer and may not have the broad vision necessary for a comprehensive rural development program. However, if he does leave office soon, the rural works program will suffer as Sediq has dominated most of the agency decisionmaking.² It is customary for high ranking officers, when forced out of office, to take all of their signed documents with them as they fear that these will later be used to further incriminate them.³ Disappearance of important documents only adds to disruption caused by the turnover in management.

Both Salzburg and Glaister strongly expressed their dismay over the inability of Vice President Saqui to properly execute his administrative responsibilities.⁴

Two key members of RDD's senior staff may soon be leaving RDD for extended studies abroad. These are Mr. Ismael, Director of the Planning and Chief RDD Construction Engineer for Loghar Province who is planning to leave for the United States some time in 1977, and Sahib Jan, Director of Engineering, who is planning to leave shortly for the Netherlands.⁵ Both of these people have been with RDD for many years and impressed the evaluation team with their knowledge and insights.

Transfers within RDD have been very frequent due to limited manpower and the need to fill manpower gaps in different offices and provinces according to the construction season and the projects being implemented. There was no clear division of manpower

¹ Chuck Johnson, in an interview May 1, 1976, labelled Sediq "a political lightweight." Other interviewees have also mentioned that Sediq may not have the political strength required for a rural development coordinator.

² Interview with George Glaister, April 30, 1976.

³ Interview with John Standish and Donald Reilly, May 3, 1976.

⁴ Interview with Glaister, April 30th, and with Joseph Salzburg, Rural Works Project Senior Advisor, May 4, 1976.

⁵ Interview with Ismael, May 5, 1976 and with Sahib Jan, April 28, 1976.

within the agency, and engineers and technicians were regularly switched from design to survey to construction work,¹ although recent reorganization within the agency has occurred with emphasis on maintaining a division of labor.² New recruits will be trained in specific skills that will not allow easy transfer from office to office.

Conclusions

The assumption that staff turnover rate is not so great as to endanger continuity of RDD program should be considered invalid. The loss of President Sediq and two of his top staff could cause serious problems for the rural works program but would have less impact on the rural development program if Sediq is replaced with someone who has political strength and an understanding of rural development. According to Martin Kumorek, individuals are available who would qualify.

The probability that both Ismael and Sahib Jan will leave is high. Given their ability and experience and the small number of new engineers RDD has been able to acquire each year (generally three inexperienced engineers), a slower rate of growth of rural works projects can be expected.

Transfer of newly trained staff to other offices can be expected but recent reorganization of RDD should limit this to an acceptable level that would not endanger RDD effectiveness. Although the validity of this assumption on transfer has been questionable in the past, it should be considered valid in the current RDD environment and monitored carefully in the future. Special attention should be paid to the Planning Office which has had a poor record for transfers in the past but which now (as of June 1976) has official status and a "permanent" staff.

5. Small Farmers will have Surplus Labor Time Available and will be Willing to Offer it

Findings

Small farmers in most parts of the country are available to work on rural projects if they are paid for their labor and

¹ Interview with Glaister, April 30th and with Standish and Reilly, May 3rd.

² Glaister interview, April 30th.

and if it is not the planting or harvesting season. Near the Iran border, villagers will migrate to Iran when they are not needed in their own fields. Wages paid migrants for unskilled labor in Iran are reported to be around 300 afis per day, more than three times the average wage for unskilled labor in Afghanistan. It is therefore hard to recruit unskilled labor for rural works projects in parts of the country near the Iran border.¹

During the 1971 and 1972 drought period, food-for-work programs sponsored by the United States and the World Food Program were used extensively throughout Afghanistan as a means of providing additional food to Afghans. We were told that prior to this period it was not uncommon for villages to volunteer their labor for rural works projects and in some cases when there was not enough labor in the village that was to benefit from the works project the villagers would pay for labor from the other villages. Villagers also provided the necessary local materials.²

After the drought was over the World Food Program continued to provide food as payment for local labor on rural works programs. In 1975 RDD used up about two-thirds of the total 3.7 million food rations supplied to Afghanistan by WFP. President Sediq expects RDD to provide 3.5 million rations for rural works projects this year. Sediq is chairman of the WFP/GOA policy committee and has full authority to decide which RDD projects are to receive WFP assistance.³

Currently only about five percent of RDD projects use voluntary labor. For 95 percent of projects labor is paid by either WFP or FAR.⁴ Mr. Ismael of RDD explained that it is becoming more and more difficult to find villages in which local labor is volunteered -- this is because villagers hear about other projects in which local labor was paid. They tell the government that they are too poor to work for free, that their families will starve during the time that they are supplying voluntary labor. Yet these same people willingly contribute their time each year to repairing the same intakes and jui wash crossings that RDD is paying them to build as a permanent structure. They know that the government has the food or money and that if they insist they will get it.⁵

¹ Information supplied by George Glaister in an interview April 30, 1976.

² Interviews with Ismael of RDD, April 25 and May 5, 1976.

³ Interview with President Sediq, May 10, 1976.

⁴ Information supplied by Chessin, Rural Works Project Advisor.

⁵ Interview with Ismael, May 5th.

When projects do use voluntary labor, the amount of time that individuals donate to a project is much less than they normally give when they are being paid for their services. Paid labor works from 7 AM to 4:30 PM with one hour for lunch. Voluntary labor will show up late in the morning (around 10 AM) and then stop work early (around 2 PM) so that either more laborers or more time will be needed to complete the same amount of work.¹ If a project is started with voluntary labor before the harvest season but then extends into the harvest season, the voluntary labor force that was available before the harvest will disappear and project construction work will be delayed. Delays that carry into the winter can cause serious problems, as the spring thaws will bring high water, sometimes washing out a half finished bridge or water control structure.²

Another problem encountered by RDD is that villagers will initially agree to supply voluntary labor and local materials, but then fail to appear when construction is to begin; they complain that they are too poor to work for free. It is thus difficult to predict whether voluntary labor will actually be made available.³

The current WFP program will terminate in 1978. An evaluation of the current program will take place before a follow-up program is approved. The plans for the follow-up program are to increase WFP assistance by two-and-one-half times the current level of assistance.⁴ Sediq has doubts as to whether the WFP follow-up program will be approved while Mr. Glaister, the senior UN advisor to RDD, thinks it is likely that the program will be approved.⁵ The USAID Mission Director has requested in the past that the U.S. representatives to WFP in Rome recommend that WFP in Afghanistan be discontinued but the request was not accepted in Washington.⁶

RDD policy is that no payments are to be made for local unskilled labor except for projects supported by foreign donors;⁶

¹ Ismael, April 25th.

² Glaister interview, May 10th.

³ Ismael interview, April 25th.

⁴ Sediq interview, May 10th.

⁵ Sediq interview, May 10th, Glaister interview, May 10th.

⁶ Interview with Messrs. Vincent Brown and Frederick Sligh, Mission Director and Deputy Director, May 11, 1976.

⁷ Sediq interview, May 10th.

RDD does not have a budget to pay for unskilled labor.¹ The WFP food ration has been below the cash value of what most villagers consider to be an appropriate daily wage. RDD has received GOA permission to supplement the food ration with a cash payment of 10 to 20 Afs for government projects (those projects for which villagers do not perceive immediate direct benefits or do not perceive their responsibility -- e.g., roads, schools). Mr. Glaister suggested that RDD is paying this extra money out of its skilled labor budget.² We received mixed information from RDD officials as to whether or not RDD has permission to pay the additional 25 percent unskilled labor costs for FAR projects (FAR 75 percent of total estimated costs). Sediq suggested that local unskilled laborers are volunteering their labor one day each week so that RDD would not have to pay the 25 percent.³ We found no evidence that villagers were volunteering any of their labor for FAR projects.

The Project Paper states:

"4. There is adequate GOA precedent for cash payment of unskilled labor in RDD projects. Unskilled labor has always been voluntary, conscripted or paid with food. USAID has urged the RDD to pay for unskilled labor used on rural works."⁴

Conclusions

If payments for unskilled labor, either in food or in cash, are to be continued indiscriminately, it will become extremely difficult for RDD to find any villages in Afghanistan in which local people will be willing to work for free. A continuation of the policy of paying for local unskilled labor does not represent a problem if: (1) the GOA and RDD want to establish a nationwide extensive rural works program and rural development program, both of which would call for a heavy input of local unskilled labor; and (2) RDD is willing to expand its budget for the millions of afs that would be necessary to pay this labor or is confident that foreign donors will continue to supply the necessary money or food to pay for this labor. The evaluation team believes that the foreign donors cannot be counted on to continue such payments and that GOA will not have the financial resources necessary to support payment for local unskilled labor for a nationwide rural development program.

¹ Sediq interview, May 10th.

² Glaister interview, May 10th.

³ Sediq interview, May 10th.

⁴ Project Paper, p. 42.

The assumption is valid only so far as the government is able to provide payment for the small farmer's labor time; that the payment must be competitive with normal market wage rates in the rural areas.

Recommendations

USAID should recommend to Washington in as forceful a way as possible that the WFP assistance be terminated or be controlled to the point that it cannot be used to pay for unskilled labor indiscriminately (the controls should follow the recommendation directly below).

Payments for local unskilled labor should be discontinued to those people who will be obtaining direct immediate benefits from an RDD project. This should be the case for all water control structures (minor irrigation systems) and for bridges that are clearly intended to benefit a particular village, are within the immediate territory of the benefitting village, and for which villagers can perceive the benefits. Integrated rural development projects should also be limited to voluntary unskilled labor.

Construction projects for roads and for bridges other than the kind described above should provide payment for all unskilled labor.

The cost of local materials is generally in terms of the labor necessary to dig or cut the materials, load or unload them, and transport them (when RDD transport is not available). Payment for this labor should be dealt with in the same way as the local unskilled labor payments mentioned above.

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| <p>6. RDD Capabilities Developed in the Pilot Phase Will be Maintained in Phase I</p> |
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Findings

The general opinion of people interviewed by the evaluation team is that the Pilot Phase brought many improvements to RDD.¹

¹ See p. 48.

The Project Paper mentions improvements in cost estimating procedures and RDD construction, and the development of (1) uniform design and construction standards and specifications and (2) a close collaboration between RDD and USAID personnel.¹

Cost Estimation

During the Pilot Phase USAID personnel gave assistance to RDD in developing cost estimates for FAR projects. Until August 1975, RDD and USAID had differences of opinion regarding what constituted proper guidelines for cost estimates on major items in rural works construction. It was finally decided to bring in a third party, Coopers & Lybrand (an accounting firm from Teheran), to provide guidelines, and a study was done in 13 provinces of the country. The accuracy of the guidelines is suspect.² The following are excerpts from the report:

"We made no purchases to substantiate those prices which were quoted to us. It is possible that certain of the prices would have been reduced following further discussions with the suppliers,...

"We found that suppliers were reluctant to quote winter prices which we were requested to obtain for four locations."

"...it should be noted that the construction departments of the Government of Afghanistan may be able to negotiate lower prices than those obtained under normal circumstances.

"Truck capacity specifications proved difficult to obtain....

"Animals owners, where contacted, were unwilling to discuss hire terms without full details of distances involved and materials to be carried and it therefore became impractical to carry our inquiries further.

"It would appear to us that this quotation is rather low and therefore needs to be treated with some caution (Afghan Transport Company rates)."

¹ Project Paper, p. 40.

² According to Barnett Chessin, Rural Works Project Advisor, "The Coopers & Lybrand study is inadequate as it has too many homes." Interview, May 3, 1976.

The Coopers & Lybrand guidelines are being used by USAID to review the RDD cost estimates. The CDE office, which has responsibility for approving RDD estimates, has found that these estimates are usually within ten percent of the guidelines.¹ Under the FAR system no one need ask questions about the actual cost of projects. The cost estimates are used to determine how much GOA will be reimbursed; when USAID sees that the work was done properly, payments is made according to the estimate, regardless of actual cost. The problem is that no one knows the actual cost, not even the Afghans in RDD.² Mr. Glaister, the UN senior advisor to RDD, suspects that the cost estimates are on the low side.³

The RDD accounting system cannot calculate the actual costs of RDD projects. There is no central bookkeeping of all project costs, and a line item accounting system is used. Some costs are recorded in provinces while others are recorded in GOA agencies. Some materials are purchased in bulk and distributed to the provinces and then to the projects without any cost breakdown on distribution. Beyond this very little is known in USAID about the RDD accounting system, or about how payments are actually made.

In the Memorandum of Understanding between USAID and RDD to implement the Project Agreement it is stated:

"RDD will maintain records of actual costs of each project to assist RDD and USAID in preparing and reviewing estimated costs for future projects. The nature and form of such records shall be determined by mutual agreement of the President, RDD, and the USAID Project Manager (p. 6)."

There was no evidence found by the evaluation team to indicate that any form of agreement was made between USAID and RDD in regard to cost records.

No one in the USAID Mission knew how RDD was paying the local unskilled laborers. One USAID staff member suggested that "We are paying RDD for labor that has not paid to the laborers. GOA does not have a mechanism for paying labor."⁴ The evaluation team found no evidence that laborers were not being paid for FAR projects (see pp.A-45-49 for problems with WFP

¹ Interview with John Standish and Donald Reilly, May 3, 1976.

² Interview with George Glaister, May 10, 1976.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Interview with Charles Johnson, May 1, 1976.

food payments) but there was no RDD agency-wide policy of payment procedures. In Nangahar Province we found that the RDD Director had set up a committee to pay laborers; the committee consisted of one RDD staff member, one person from the Governor's office and one representative from the village.¹ In the Memorandum of Understanding it is stated:

"After the promulgation of a GOA policy for payment of unskilled labor as agreed in the Project Agreement (III B), RDD and USAID/Afghanistan will mutually agree upon the procedures to be followed in paying such laborers (page 6)."

A GOA policy for payment of unskilled labor has not been promulgated and there has been no agreement between RDD and USAID on payment procedures.

RDD Construction

It is reasonable to expect that improvements in RDD construction occurred in the Pilot Phase as a result of improved design standards and construction specifications and also as a result of lessons learned by RDD engineers who accompanied CDE engineers on site visits to FAR projects. However, the Pilot Phase provided for no formal training of CDE engineers and there were no measureable indicators to demonstrate improvement in RDD construction.

Design Standards

Prior to the Pilot Phase, designs were drawn using standards that were brought to RDD by UN advisors.² During the Pilot Phase, uniform standards were developed for RDD by the USAID engineers. Although these uniform standards are still being applied in RDD, the designs submitted to USAID at the beginning of Phase I were of very poor quality. According to Brent Gatch, a CDE engineer, "We had a very difficult time trying to find just one drawing that met our minimum criteria."³ According to Gatch, who is the Rural Works Project Engineer, RDD designs for water control structures, contrary to normal design practice, do not include elevation and hydraulic data. Most engineers would need this data, but the Afghan engineer doesn't bother because the structure is built into an already

¹ Field trip by DAI evaluation team to Nangahar Province, May 5, 1976.

² Standish and Reilly interview, May 3rd.

³ Interview with Brent Gatch, May 26, 1976.

functioning water system and the local people who operate the system can tell the engineers exactly what they need to know to build the structure properly without the design data.¹

Construction Specifications

The construction specifications developed in the Pilot Phase are not being applied across the board in RDD. According to President Sediq, RDD engineers do not have the skills or equipment required to construct to AID specifications for all RDD projects. RDD attempts to meet AID specification for FAR projects.²

RDD/USAID Collaboration

Close collaboration between RDD and USAID personnel has not been maintained in Phase I. Contact between RDD and USAID personnel has diminished since departure of the Pilot Phase staff. (See AID Support to the Rural Works Component of the Rural Development Department on pages 17-22 for details.)

Conclusions

Whatever RDD ability to do cost estimates was gained in the Pilot Phase, it is not sufficient to allow for confidence that actual and estimated costs are within reasonable range. The difference between estimated costs and actual costs for FAR projects is now known. A small difference probably would not matter but is a wide divergence between the two could discredit both the project and the FAR system.³

Whatever improvements in RDD construction were made in the Pilot Phase, it is reasonable to expect that they are being maintained in Phase I, as none of the RDD engineers have transferred from RDD and there is no evidence of change in RDD's intention to use improved methods.

RDD appears content with its uniform design standards, and it now appears to be a question of improving RDD design skills to meet the design standards. Some of the standards may be inappropriate for the Afghan environment.

¹ Gatch interview, May 26th.

² Interview with President Sediq, May 10, 1976.

³ This is supported in a memorandum of Terrence J. McMahon, Director of the Controller's Office, to Frederick Sligh, Mission Deputy Director, dated December 10, 1974, and which read in part: "Extreme variations between payments and actual costs will produce critical implementation problems and discredit the fixed cost reimbursement procedure."

Construction specifications for FAR projects developed in the Pilot Phase are being maintained on FAR projects in Phase I. These specifications are not being used to their full extent on many non-FAR projects.

While relations between USAID and RDD personnel appear to be amiable, the lack of a close collaboration will impede USAID attempts to bring about desired changes in RDD.

Recommendations

- USAID should further improve RDD capabilities to do cost estimates by providing a part-time advisor from the USAID Controller's Office to work with both the RDD Planning Office and the Accounting Office. Working in close collaboration with RDD staff, the advisor would be responsible for the following:
 1. Analysis of RDD accounting procedures;
 2. Verification of Coopers & Lybrand guidelines and adjustment of guidelines when necessary;
 3. Analysis of RDD payment procedures; and
 4. Recommendations for change in RDD procedures.
- USAID/CDE should examine USAID/RDD design standards and construction specifications in light of possible adjustments to make them more appropriate to the Afghan environment.
- A local engineer should be hired by USAID and given special training to qualify him to give on-the-job training and assistance to regular RDD staff.
- Rural Works Project staff members (except Senior Project Advisor) should spend no more than an average of one day per week in USAID offices. Secretarial services and office supplies should be provided for them at RDD by USAID.

7. Contractors with Required Skills
Can be Found and Hired to Meet Schedule

Findings

The Project Paper called for two types of contract personnel: A U.S. "intermediary" contractor to provide services of a Team Leader and Analyst, and a third country contractor to provide engineers for projects' monitoring and inspection.¹ For the former, the PP recommended using Personnel Service Contracts as the least cost method of securing the needed services.² For the analyst position it was decided to make a personal service contract with Al Nehoda who was to arrive on board July 1, 1975. To hire Nehoda the Mission needed GOA clearance, but the application for clearance submitted to the Ministry of Finance in October 1975³ received no response until January 1976 when the Mission Director made a personal request for action to the Minister of Finance. Nehoda arrived in late January 1976. There was no explanation from the Ministry of Finance on why the application took so long to process.⁴ USAID decided not to fill the position of Team Leader but to create an additional staff position for direct hire.

The contract with a third country engineering firm never materialized, as the cost for such a contract turned out to be more than USAID was willing to spend. It was finally decided that the only services that would be cost-effective would be those of local Afghan engineers hired on personal service contracts.⁵

According to Harvey Brown, USAID Director of Management, the Afghans USAID wants to hire need to first obtain work permits from GOA. The procedures to obtain a work permit are not difficult but if GOA deems an applicant undesirable, it sits on the application until the Mission gets fed up and switches

¹ Project Paper, p. 23.

² Ibid., p. 24

³ The Nehoda application was not cleared in Washington until October due to the AID no-hire policy after the fall of Saigon. Nehoda was finally cleared after an appeal to top-level AID/Washington staff.

⁴ Interview with Harvey Brown, May 28, 1976.

⁵ Interview with John Standish and Donald Reilly of CDE, May 3, 1976.

to another applicant. While no problems are expected, such delays could occur.¹

The Afghan personal service contract engineers will monitor construction of RDD projects. Afghan engineers who have been employed in CDE have been reluctant to criticize the designs drawn by RDD engineers, and the PSCs will have to be tested to see if they will have problems criticizing RDD construction.² There exists also the potential for corruption.³ The PSCs will be stationed in a province for a short period of time and then transferred to another province; this process will continue to make it more difficult for the PSCs to develop too close a relationship with the people whose construction they are monitoring.⁴

Conclusions

The assumption has proven to be invalid as considerable problems did arise. The monitors must be neutral and objective and there is some risk involved in hiring Afghans to do this job.

Recommendations

For U.S. contractors who will be hired in the future, this assumption should remain intact and should be given only a fair probability of being valid.

1 Brown interview, May 28th.

2 Interview with Brent Gatch, Project Engineer, May 26, 1976.

3 The Project Paper recommended against the use of an Afghan firm or semi-private agency "because of the limited number of trained personnel available and reservations concerning the availability of personnel that could perform objectively in an environment where social and family pressures could be brought to bear on the inspection work. (Appendix VI, p. 3)

4 Standish and Reilly interview, May 3rd.

8. GOA Has Adequately Trainable and/or Qualified Personnel to Be Assigned to RDD

9. GOA Will Assign Personnel to RDD on Priority Basis

Findings

RDD does not receive special status to assist it in obtaining qualified personnel. It competes with other agencies on an equal basis and can be more successful only to the degree that it can attract those seeking work within the government. Applicants for employment in the civil service are processed by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The applicants are given four choices of agencies for which they would like to work.¹

According to President Sediq, many applicants include RDD on their list of choices because they have heard that RDD has fellowships for study abroad.² However, most educated Afghans prefer to work in Kabul, and employment in RDD often means being posted to the rural areas. RDD cannot offer higher salaries but does have several policies to offer added incentives for people to work in the rural areas. One is maximizing per diem. RDD will post some staff in Kabul although they will be spending most of their time outside of Kabul. This qualifies them for per diem that they would not normally receive. The GOA per diem policy is to give 100 percent per diem for 90 days, then 60 percent for six months and then nothing. RDD has a special policy that gives 100 percent per diem for the full time that a person is in the field (away from his home).³ A second incentive is the potential for a rapid rise in rank. A college graduate, after only three years in RDD, can be promoted to RDD Province Director with a rank 4.⁴

¹ Interview with President Sediq, May 10, 1976.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. Al Nehoda told the evaluation team that the current GOA per diem rate does not cover normal field trip expenses.

⁴ Ibid.

The GOA used to have six special benefits for Afghans willing to take field assignments:

- Premium pay (as much as 60 to 80 percent above salary);
- Free transportation;
- Educational arrangements for children;
- ~~Housing allowance;~~
- R and R; and
- Food allowance.¹

These benefits were rescinded at the time of the coup and have yet to be reinstated.²

RDD has been able to attract only a minimal number of engineers each year. Three engineers came on board last year and it is expected that three more can be recruited this year.³ RDD now has 24 engineers (plus two more on special contract) but has slots for 34 this year. Technicians who are graduates of the Afghanistan Institute of Technology who have had two years of practical experience with RDD have been able to fill the engineer slots.⁴ However, these technicians are also in short supply⁵ and RDD is now recruiting twelfth-grade graduates with non-technical education. These people will be given special technical training that will qualify them as assistant technicians. There are about 25,000 unemployed twelfth-grade graduates.⁶

RDD recently adopted a policy of hiring female engineers (mainly for design work) which will give RDD access to a larger manpower (personpower) pool.

¹ Interview with John Standish and Donald Reilly of USAID, CDE, May 3, 1976.

² Ibid.

³ Sediq interview, May 10th

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ RDD is projecting about ten new technicians recruited each year.

⁶ Orientation seminar for DAI evaluation team, comments by Louis Dupree, April 21, 1976.

George Glaister, the UN senior advisor to RDD, estimated that 129 technicians would be needed to fill manpower requirements for this year's rural works projects. RDD will have a shortage of 60 technicians. The number of projects targeted did not take into account this lack of manpower, and Mr. Glaister estimates that RDD will therefore complete only about 70-75 percent of planned projects with some flexibility in this estimate depending on RDD's ability to train the assistant technicians quickly and effectively. The emphasis in training will be on developing skills that are narrowly defined for each trainee.¹

Conclusions

Incentives to work for RDD are not strong enough to attract a sufficient number of new applicants. Personnel will not be assigned to RDD on a priority basis. RDD must expect recruitment of engineers and technicians to be minimal, continue to maximize incentives for field work to attract qualified personnel and develop the assistant technician program if it is to have sufficient staff to expand at even a moderate rate.

Recommendations

USAID should provide RDD with a technical advisor to develop training curriculum for people with non-technical backgrounds in fundamental, narrowly defined technical skills. (This should be coordinated with UN technical assistance to RDD.)

A local engineer² should be hired by USAID and given special training to qualify him to train assistant technicians and technicians in courses designed by the curriculum advisor.

¹ Interview with George Glaister, April 30, 1976.

² Al Nehoda suggests that this man be of senior rank and near or at retirement in order to have the respect necessary to be an effective trainer in the Afghan cultural environment.

B. OUTPUT TO PURPOSE ASSUMPTIONS

Introduction

Social and economic benefits will accrue to the rural target population (the PURPOSE of the project) if RDD builds rural works which were requested by the rural target population.

This hypothesis is based upon a set of assumptions -- important issues which were not made an explicit part of the project -- which underlie the original project design. Seven assumptions have been identified and will be examined in some detail:

1. The rural population is capable of identifying projects which benefit them.
2. The local power elite will not frustrate widespread benefit incidence.
3. Small farmers will seek to increase production for additional income and/or food consumption.
4. Small farmers have access to a technology, or have sufficient knowledge themselves to take advantage of additional water resources.
5. Small farmers have access to necessary agricultural inputs (e.g. fertilizer) to take advantage of additional water resources.
6. Road and bridge improvement will allow farmers to increase production.
7. State-of-the-art in the determination of social and economic benefits is sufficient to meet project selection criteria and evaluation needs.

Summary

Of these seven assumptions four were found to be invalid (numbers 2,4,5 and 7) with the three remaining assumptions valid. The major constraints to purpose achievement that were

uncovered in the analysis of assumptions are (1) benefits to the small farmer cannot be assured by production of the project outputs alone, and (2) the cost of obtaining information on benefits to the small farmer will be more than originally envisaged, and the information obtainable will be less than adequate to have full confidence that the small farmers are benefiting as planned.

1. The Rural Population Is Capable
of Identifying Projects Which Benefit Them

Findings

There are two levels of analysis. The first and most straight-forward is to accept this assumption at face value. There is no reason to believe that the rural population does not have a keen understanding of its own self-interest, as well as the ability to make that self-interest known through requests for rural works.

The second level of analysis is a good deal more complex. We have no evidence that the projects selected, though beneficial, are the most beneficial to the largest number of beneficiaries. A rural population's "felt needs" are a good place to start development -- to gain the confidence of the rural people -- but a poor criteria for project selection and an inefficient allocation system for development resources.¹ In the context of rural Afghanistan, there are powerful reasons to limit dependence upon the rural population to identify development projects.

- There is neither social nor economic homogeneity nor an institutional structure which can compensate for skewed local power distribution in rural Afghanistan.
- Actual requests for RDD assistance may differ from the perceived needs of "most" villagers.

¹ See Project Issues: 1) Project Selection - Scarce Resources, for a more detailed analysis of this point.

- The rural village has a traditionally short time horizon for benefits. Water this season is nearly always preferred to improved access to the outside world (roads and bridges) which bring benefits over several years.¹
- A lack of technical knowledge may prevent requests for specific solutions to local problems from being optimum.
- An inability to identify causes of problems, or more often, an inability to see a problem may eliminate important development assistance from a villager's list of felt needs.
- A lack of understanding of how their village fits into the overall regional or district economic system may present "best" solutions to village needs from being obvious to villagers.

Perhaps most important is the growing prospect that villagers will request what they see as "free" goods and services from the government. It has only been 20 years since the national government had to make powerful and occasionally forceful intrusions into rural areas to gain acceptance of primary education. The majority of the villagers, particularly those in remote areas, still view government intrusions with probably well-founded suspicion. However, the advent of the first community development programs (the predecessors of RDD some 18 years ago) spurred by the widespread distribution of food during the major drought of 1970-72, has brought a significant change of attitude. In villages accustomed to government visits, the local representatives may have prepared a list of "felt needs" which are chosen to be most appropriate for the agency represented by the officials. While the requests are occasionally for a cooperative project (people working with the government to solve local needs), more frequently requests are for services from the government. If one component of a realistic and successful development program centers upon the mobilization of local resources, then villager identification of projects to be built without their contribution may not bring long-term benefits to the rural population.²

¹ In addition to a strong discount for future benefits, roads and bridges consume valuable farmland which may create strong opposition to the project from villagers.

² See Project Issues: 1) Project Selection for an expanded discussion of this point.

Conclusions

The rural population is capable of identifying projects in its own short-term self-interest. Once a successful RDD project has been completed in one rural area, a cluster of additional petitions from the surrounding area will attest to the short-term benefit of the project to the rural population as well as to the government. However, RDD cannot service all the petitions or solve all the felt needs of the rural population. There is no good reason to base a development program upon "beneficial" requests for rural works.

Recommendations

The assumption in its most simple form is a truism. In its more complex derivation, it calls for a significant change in development approach if a rural works program is to support a rural development program. Such a change is discussed in the ISSUES section of this report.

2. The Local Power Elite Will Not Frustrate Widespread Benefit Incidence

Findings

There is little evidence to support this assumption and a good deal of opinion which denies its validity. It is difficult to overemphasize the lack of knowledge about rural Afghanistan. There are few statistics, few sensitive village studies which are in any way representative. The government has apparently discouraged research into village life and social organization, preferring to keep the interface between local power authority and outside government authority distant and thus harmonious. The few published studies on land distribution in the rural areas report massive holdings by a very small percentage of the total population, but the disaggregation between drylands (which may have thousands of acres owned by individuals) and irrigated valleys is less clear.¹ Long time observers of rural Afghanistan society

¹ Land holding by ownership percentage is given in A.D. Davydov, *The Development of Kapitalism in Afghanistan Agriculture*, Moscow, 1962, but may be tendentious. A German study on the Paktia Development Administration reported that in the region of their program, two percent of the population was estimated to control 67 percent of the land. Both are taken from Lloyd I.Z. Baron, "The Water Supply Constraint: An Evaluation of Irrigation Projects and Their Role in the Development of Afghanistan", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, Montreal, 15 March, page 265.

argue that some areas are relatively homogeneous in land ownership and water rights, and that the power elite in these areas so closely resemble the majority of villagers that little diversion of benefits from a development project should be expected.

In other areas, generally reported to be those inhabited by the Pushtuns (comprising 30-50 percent of the population), there is evidence of strong local elite who have key roles in the distribution of benefits from any development undertaking. Using improved irrigation as an example, there are two extremes. In the first case, the increased water might be distributed equally over the available land, with the already relatively wealthy receiving their percentage share of the water, and the ensuing benefits, if any. All villagers with access to land and increased water would share in the benefits, but the elite would increase their absolute position over fellow villagers because of the impact of the water project. In the second instance, the local elite might cause the water to be distributed inefficiently and unequally. This is the opinion of one observer of water rights in rural Afghanistan.

"All disputes over water should be settled depending on the amount of land which is owned by the parties. This is the major principle of the Shariat: 'the right of land for water'. The Shariat says 'the basis for water distribution is the areas of arable land' and the 'land belongs to a man who has irrigated it'.

"The divergence between the religiously decreed normative situation and the actual is revealed by frequent and violent altercations in periods of water shortage. At the margin ethical values give way to the assertion of brute power.

"The usual order to distribution and utilization of water for irrigation is determined by the owner of the canal. He invariably is a large land owner (in some cases water is owned communally by a village or group of farmers) who determines the amount he will use for himself first, how much to distribute to his tenants and how much finally he must share with the other farmers.¹ As long as

¹ Comment by Al Nehoda: "If the land owner in question owns all the land served by an irrigation canal, then he alone, of course would have exclusive rights to all the water. He would be responsible for building and maintaining the irrigation structure. In 'distributing water to his tenants' he is in fact serving himself since he receives most of the crops grown by the sharecroppers utilizing his land.

"Difficulties over water rights probably most frequently arise not among farmers in a given village, even though land may not be equally distributed; but among different villages sharing a common irrigation canal."

he is not charged for an additional supply his utility maximization subject to zero cost restraint (above the productive demands for water) is the measure of social loss."¹

Census-survey type data was obtained by interviewers in 10 villages in high-potential agricultural areas in 1970.² In the 10 villages, 723 family decisionmakers were questioned for approximately one hour. Among the data of interest to this evaluation, they reported on concentration of land and resources in the hands of the landlords, owner-operators and sharecroppers. The Gini coefficient for land by province ranged from a low of .22 to a high of .36, suggesting far less land concentration than in Latin America.³ The study concluded,

"...the relative equality of ownership, incomes and even adoption behavior indicates rather different cultural and situational constraints operating on the farmers. Despite the fact that landlords own much more than sharecroppers, there is a large middle group of owner-operators who tend to own moderately sized plots of ground and who are fairly equal in incomes. Keeping in mind the subsistence-level incomes of almost all farmers in the sample, the large group of owner-operators functions something like a middle class to assure more equal distribution of the sources of wealth within a community than would otherwise be expected.

"...these hamlets in Afghanistan are not characterized by the enormous differences in wealth characteristic of many areas of Latin America."⁴

The religious, social and cultural patterns of rural society tend to prevent the local elite from taking full advantage of their powerful positions. These patterns instill in them either individual responsibilities for workers on their land (a patron/client relationship) or a more general assumption of responsibility to assist the community of which they are a substantial member (majority stockholder might be the more appropriate analogy). In a country only a few generations

¹ Baron, op. cit., page 269-270.

² Gordon C. Whiting and Rufus B. Hughes, *The Afghan Farmer: Report of a Survey*, Robert R. Nathan Associates, Inc., Washington, D.C., October 1971.

³ Table 14, the Gini Coefficient for the Russian study (A.D. Davydov) considering all cultivated land, was .82.

⁴ Ibid, page 48.

removed from feudal relationships, the family/tribal ties are said to mitigate against the accumulation of power and wealth for individual gratification. The majority of supporting evidence is based upon case studies by various anthropologists. With wide natural environment, ethnic and religious differences, any individual study may be accurate, but not provide a basis for generalization.

Conclusions

When benefits from RDD projects accrue to specific individuals, as in water projects, widespread benefit incidence cannot be assumed in rural Afghanistan.

Recommendations

We recommend that in cases where it is not cost-effective to insure that the poor are receiving a substantial portion of the benefits -- that is in small water intakes, etc. -- such projects be phased out from AID support. They can be replaced by AID funding to the minor irrigation systems (MIS), which should be large enough to justify the expenditure of social/economic research needed to insure compliance with AID's stated objectives in reaching the rural poor majority.

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| <p>3. Small Farmers Will Seek to Increase Production for Additional Income and/or Food Consumption</p> |
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Findings

It seems clear from the evidence that the principal reason for a lack of modern agricultural techniques in Afghanistan is not due to the cultural disposition of small farmers. The evidence of the switch between wheat and cotton as the relative prices changed -- next year's planting being based upon relative prices from the previous year -- suggests a rational, economic calculation. The survey of farmers in 10 villages concluded:

"In our sample at least, attitudes toward technical change are already highly positive, farmers do not appear to suffer mental inflexibility, and personal characteristics do not seem to be important impediments to the spread of innovations."¹

Still another researcher involved in the agricultural sector reported:

"In conclusion, the Afghan farmer may be wary to adopt modern agriculture, but this reluctance is based on sound common sense. He does not appear an innately intractable man devoted to antiquated agriculture. He is keen to produce more, but is only willing to do so if it is worthwhile. This does not only mean extremely profitable, but must also carry low risk and not require much additional effort on his part. To the Afghan, there are things of equal if not greater importance than material wealth, notably status and respect."²

Conclusions

This is a valid assumption.

Recommendations

This assumption should remain a part of the revised Logical Framework.

4. Small Farmers Have Access to a Technology, or Have Sufficient Knowledge Themselves to Take Advantage of Additional Water Resources

Findings

The original designers of the Rural Works project apparently were convinced that additional water represented a missing ingredient which was impeding Afghanistan's march toward modern

¹ Whiting and Hughes, op.cit., page 50.

² John R. Borthwick, "Food Production and Agricultural Development in Afghanistan," USAID, Kabul, September 1975, page 42.

agriculture. To examine this assumption the following considerations are useful:

- The additional water resources made available by the RDD project are for the most part composed of two elements: 1) more consistent water across the crop cycle, and 2) earlier water during the crop cycle, as the village-constructed intakes from the mountain streams often wash out during the spring floods;
- More consistent or earlier water brings little new land into production; the technological packages available for farmers consist solely of high-cost, high-input utilization of advanced seeds and fertilizer, the result of the government's program to achieve self-sufficiency in basic food grains. It is undifferentiated by type of environment, used by only five percent of the nation's larger wheat farmers who have access to credit, seeds and fertilizer, and is inappropriate for small farmers.¹
- Even if there were advanced technology appropriate for small farmers, no extension mechanism exists to bring this knowledge to the farmer. In the more highly developed and favored agricultural regions surveyed in 1970, 63 percent of the farmers interviewed did not know their extension agent, and 82 percent of those who knew the agent, did not believe that he had helped them.² The principal occupation of the 2,850 extension agents is to sell the seed/fertilizer package to larger farmers -- a preoccupation, the World Bank reported in 1975, which consumed more than six months per agent per year.
- Even if technology were available to increase small farmer output (and extension knowledge, inputs, credit, etc.), it would most likely affect the wheat crop, the subsistence farmers' mainstay. Since the price elasticity of wheat

¹ The recommended dosage is 75 kg. per jerib, everywhere. See Borthwick, op.cit., page 61. The farmers are too intelligent to follow such instructions, and a wide difference in use rates and times of application is reported. See IBRD, cited below, page 8.

² Whiting and Hughes, op.cit., Table 2.

is estimated to be -.3, with the country reaching self-sufficiency in recent years, increasing wheat yields of many small farmers would not, in fact, help the small farmer, as the price of wheat would be driven down to eliminate his income benefits.¹

Conclusion

There is no developed technology appropriate to small farmers, nor any extension system capable of delivering a technology, should it be developed, to utilize additional water resources from RDD irrigation projects.² In addition, the specialists have indicated that little additional water, but more consistent and earlier water, is the major output of the small water projects. Small irrigation projects may in fact increase production, occasionally leading to double cropping, involving more land in consistent irrigation. The production increases will undoubtedly be achieved through traditional agricultural processes.

Recommendations

If increased agricultural production based upon modern production techniques is to be an important part of the justification for AID support to RDD, then the mechanisms which will bring such production, particularly in the new MIS schemes, should be built directly into project design.

¹ Regional Project Department, Europe, Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, IBRD, "Afghanistan: Opportunities for Agricultural and Rural Development Sector Report," Volume II: Annexes, November 20, 1975, page 6. See Borthwick, op.cit., pages 60-72 for an analysis of the potential for decreased income for small farmers from expanded wheat production. He estimates that, in the absence of a national wheat stabilization program, when 10 percent of the farmers elect the high yield technology, the price will drop to eliminate returns from this technology.

² Comments by Al Nehoda: "The problem is not utilization of additional water resources, but utilizing existing resources to the full potential, by minimizing the element of risk and uncertainty in the availability of water."

"Some of these uncertainties are beyond the capability of the farmer or RDD to handle (i.e. drought), but RDD in building lasting structures is helping the water flow in a more reliable and dependable fashion. Minimizing failure of the existing system at a critical time in the cropping cycle is an important contribution to realizing full harvest potential."

5. Small Farmers Have Access to
Necessary Agricultural Inputs (e.g. Fertilizer)
to Take Advantage of Additional Water¹

Findings

The analysis of the previous assumption suggested that appropriate technology for small farmers was not available, even if adequate water resources were. In addition, fertilizer was utilized in 1974 by approximately five percent of the nation's farmers, 80-90 percent on credit from the Agricultural Development Bank.² The recommended cash payment input package for modern agricultural wheat production is \$100 per hectare more than the traditional agricultural methods, which represents nearly 50 percent of the sharecroppers' total annual net agricultural income.³ Since most economic arrangements in rural Afghanistan are reported to bypass the cash economy, the sharecroppers cash income has been variously estimated to be from \$5 per year to \$50 per year. In either event, accepting a variation of a magnitude of 10 in cash income does not change the basic findings -- without credit small farmers will not be able to purchase agricultural inputs at the level of application and use presently recommended.

Thus, the question of "access to" only has meaning within the context of "ability to purchase". Credit is conditioned on land ownership, and was used in 1974 by farmers with an average land holding of 3.08 hectares, the middle-level owner-operators. Both the fertilizer distribution system and the credit system are expanding and improving. However, they are not presently targeted on nor available to the smallest farmers.

¹ There is some understandable confusion as to whether this assumption was ever a part of the original project intent. Insofar as it was, it is valid. If it was not, then all increased agricultural output -- as desired by the project designers -- must be achieved by water consistency alone, rather than through changes in production technology on input use. We believe such production increases are likely to be miniscule.

² Borthwick, op.cit., p. 57 and p. 70.

³ Cash costs of improved wheat technology calculated from USAID/Afghanistan, "The Feasibility of a National Wheat Management Program for Afghanistan," Unpublished report, July 1974. Sharecroppers annual net farm income taken from the 10-village survey analyzed by Whiting and Hughes, op.cit., Table 5.

Conclusions

Agricultural inputs important to modernizing agriculture are not within the grasp of small farmers in Afghanistan.

Recommendations

If AID wishes to link rural works directly to increases in agricultural production, the question of small farmer access must be removed as an assumption of the project and moved into actual design of a program. This should be accomplished both in MIS and integrated rural development programs.

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| 6. Road and Bridge Improvement Will Allow Farmers to Increase Production |
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Findings

A minimum level of infrastructure is necessary for rural development, although what constitutes a minimum level is open to question. The opening of previously isolated areas has often been a first step in the process of bringing traditional subsistence farmers into the cash economy. Since Afghanistan is severely constrained by a lack of bus/truck access to rural villages, road and bridges which allow such motorized access will assist the overall process of development.

The immediate benefits of access will be lowered transportation costs, both for supplies to the villages and for sales of surplus agricultural production. There will be few rapid changes in agricultural practices. The linkages can be viewed as a necessary precondition for agricultural modernization in the future.

Conclusions

Roads and bridges linking population centers are important to rural development and are a precursor of agricultural modernization.

Recommendations

This assumption should remain as a fundamental tenet of the rural works project.

7. State-of-the-Art in the Determination of Social and Economic Benefits is Sufficient to Meet Project Selection and Evaluation Needs

Findings

The original project designers decreed that a social and economic survey would precede the selection of rural works, and that an evaluation to be based upon social and economic benefits would follow project completion. This requirement has been accepted by RDD as a perfunctory step to be accomplished prior to receiving USAID's agreement to put the project under FAR. USAID's field advisor laments the inability of the teams to obtain good socioeconomic data, the inadequacies of the present collection instrument and the lack of interest on the part of RDD.¹ One of the USAID staff deeply involved in the project rationalized the requirement for socioeconomic data as follows:

"The intent of the survey was to start with simple data gathering and then slowly develop a real socioeconomic survey instrument....An effort that is required to come up with subjective low quality data is better than nothing--it is a consciousness-raising experience. We have to start somewhere."²

No portion of the project has caused more consternation than this assumption -- that socioeconomic data is available at relatively low cost, and can be extracted to serve as both a selection criteria and as evaluation criteria. It will be examined in some detail.

¹ Details on the use of existing survey forms is contained in pages 97-101.

² Interview with C. Johnson, former Assistant Program Officer, USAID/Kabul.

The problem with the implementation of what is apparently a good idea (the socioeconomic survey) is that it represents a confrontation between the need for AID to prove that it is directing project benefits to a select target group and RDD, which is already convinced this is occurring. There are the following considerations:

- In responding to the Congressional mandate, AID/Washington has insisted on data which would show that the rural poor are, in fact, directly benefiting from development assistance. This has led to a requirement for socioeconomic baseline surveys in a number of community/rural works projects. In a similar fashion, the World Bank insists on project monitoring and evaluation units being attached to each large rural development project. Neither organization however has taken the time and effort to research and then to specify what should be collected, how it should be analyzed, and what decisions should be made upon the completed work.¹

¹ As part of a contract with TA/DA, DAI has focused on information systems to support rural development projects over the last two years. This has included the design of three such models, in various stages of completion and implementation. In addition, we have held a series of discussions with the Rural Development Department of the Bank which is intended to lead to a research project on low-cost information systems. Work with a private voluntary organization receiving AID funding which contained a requirement for a monitoring and evaluation system has furthered our understanding of the field. Our conclusion: there is no on-the-shelf technology of low-cost data collection and analysis which is generally applicable. Each system must be separately designed, implemented, analyzed and turned into a decisionmaking tool for management. In addition, there is a strong tradeoff between sending high-talent observers to the field, armed with their own good sense and intuition, and sending low-level data collectors who are bound to a collection document. The first alternative is expensive in manpower, but cheap in analysis. The second is expensive in data collection design and analysis, but inexpensive in field manpower. In a "bottom-up" program which responds to village requests, when the average project level is \$14,000, the intelligent eyeball, charged with maintaining the widest possible benefit incidence, is without equal.

- This has led to the collection of information which does not feed back into project decision-making, selection, evaluation, or redesign. Library shelves are becoming filled with studies completed on the average level of rainfall and demographic statistics.¹
- Various methodologies have been developed to utilize economic data as criteria for project selection. Unfortunately these are far more appropriate for 20-million-dollar infrastructure projects than small rural work projects.²
- RDD is satisfied that its project selection criteria adequately satisfies the needs of benefit incidence. RDD President Sedig candidly admits that in Afghanistan, where personal contacts are crucial to decisionmaking, a small portion of the rural works projects are "directed" and may have limited benefit. However, those which have been suggested for AID funding have been screened at the province level, reselected from those arriving in Kabul by the RDD staff, and visited by the AID-appointed engineer and socioeconomic survey specialist. Sedig sees little need for the consumption of scarce human talent in satisfying a paper requirement which is at the very heart of the RDD program -- delivering benefits to the rural poor.³

¹ In Peru, more than 40 man-weeks were spent collecting community baseline data in each project to receive AID funding. The studies were excellent, but made no input into project selection which was determined in practice before the socioeconomic study was completed. They were unstandardized and inappropriate for followup evaluation. However, the data was very useful to the field teams during the implementation of the project.

² See J. Price Gittinger, *Economic Analysis of Agricultural Projects*, and Lyn Squire and Herman Gvander Tak, *Economic Analysis of Projects*, both World Bank Publications.

³ Comment by Al Nehoda: "This is the first explicit indication of any such sentiments from RDD, who should be shouting their feelings from the rooftops instead of bending over backwards to placate USAID. Our program would be in a much better position, in a more decisive stage today, if RDD made its feelings known in a forceful fashion to AID."

- Rural villagers are organized to prevent incursions from the outside. All experts on rural Afghanistan emphasize the few years since the national government was only a tax collecting, army conscripting authority. The Malik is the village's first line of defense in meeting with and putting off outsiders. Since there is little government presence in villages, disputes and disagreements must normally be settled internally. This further limits the ability of outsiders to gain ready access to critical socioeconomic information.

The opinions of most observers are adequately summed up by the following conclusion:

If experiments in the transition of the agrarian production techniques are to succeed, aggressive means must be employed to extract information about the social, political and economic environment of the target groups of Afghanistan. Accurate information is not voluntarily relinquished, nor are problems openly aired before strangers. Precise information makes the groups vulnerable to attack. The vulnerability applies to farmer-Khan, Khan-governor, provincial government-central bureaucracy, and probably most of all to Afghan civil servant-foreign advisor relationships.¹

The average pre-project selection visit by RDD is likely to take less time than the journey to the site. In a few hours what can a survey team rationally be expected to learn about a complex, closed local society? If a bridge or road leads to only one farm, that can be determined. The population to be linked by the road or bridge can also be estimated, give or take a thousand, and this can be used to calculate a cost-per-potential-user ratio. The assessment of water rights, land ownership, local power relationships, sharecropping payments, status of beneficiaries compared to the rest of the area, etc. cannot be precisely and accurately learned.

¹ Baron, op.cit., page 274.

Even if some data were available, how would it be transformed into selection criteria? All other single number selection methods have proven to be easily circumvented, and those applied to the homogeneity of the population in a water-works area could be as easily manipulated.¹

One selection criterion has nearly universal application when conscripted labor is not used -- i.e. the magnitude of the voluntary contribution being offered by the community to support the project. The larger the contribution, within bounds of local economic circumstances, the more likely that benefits will flow to most of the participants. Self-interest dictates that projects which benefit only a few will have a restricted volunteer work force. Unfortunately, this promising selection criterion, particularly for water works projects which are traditionally completed by voluntary community labor, has been negated by USAID support to RDD in institutionalizing payments for labor on rural works projects.

Conclusions

There is no existing state-of-the-art in socioeconomic data collection which will extract reliable information on culturally sensitive issues from a suspicious population on the basis of a one-time visit, for use either as a selection criterion for project funding, or as an evaluation criterion after the project has been completed.² There is a developing art form which utilizes an indicator system, designed in the field, to capture changes in the behavior of participants as proxies for income measures, utilizing low-level field staff. Such a system should not be assumed to be within the capacities of Mission staff, although the specialists in economics, sociology, and rural Afghanistan could make substantive inputs into the design of such a system.

On the basis of these findings, RDD is justified in taking lightly the socioeconomic survey requirements imposed by USAID in small rural works projects. However, for larger projects under MIS or integrated rural development, selection and evaluation of benefits remains a critical need.

¹ The favorite selection device has for years been a benefit/cost ratio. Since there are dozens of qualitative judgments to be made on the selection of benefits and discount rates, projects which are judged sound by project staff will inevitably have favorable benefit/cost ratios.

² Rather than "consciousness-raising," such an exercise is inclined to be an exercise in facile penmanship, since the blocks on the form must be completed with whatever data, or whichever source, is readily available in the project area.

Recommendations

Divide the rural works projects into several categories. Assume that long-run benefits from roads and bridges will be in proportion to the population to be linked by new construction, and calculate a cost-per-potential-user ratio which can be insightful -- more for rejecting projects which are exorbitantly out of line than for use as a selection criterion. Either eliminate labor payments for small waterworks and utilize village contributions as a selection criterion, or eliminate USAID support to small water projects. Build into MIS and integrated rural development a comprehensive information system, which not only assists in project selection, but continually feeds data back to management to allow for improvement in project design. This should be an integral part of the MIS and IRD project design.

C. PURPOSE TO GOAL ASSUMPTIONS

Introduction

The purpose to goal assumptions represent factors that if the purpose is achieved, and the purpose to goal assumptions are valid, then the goal will be achieved.

The purpose to goal assumptions represent factors that are outside the control of project management. Ten assumptions have been identified and will be examined in some detail:

1. GOA is genuinely committed to rural development.
2. Accelerated output performance by RDD will instill sense of accomplishment to fuel further acceleration and improvement.
3. Resources are available to make full support goal feasible.
4. GOA endorses local participation in rural project decisions.
5. RDD High Council and Council of Presidents will function on a permanent basis.
6. Tribal and local loyalties will not impede implementation of RDD Charter.
7. Inter-ministerial conflicts will not impede implementation of RDD Charter.
8. RDD projects other than FAR-funded achieve success equal to FAR projects.
9. Other donor contributions to RDD remain stable or increase.
10. AID continues to place priority on rural development.

Summary

Of these ten assumptions four were found to be valid (numbers 1, 5, 9 and 10) and four were found to be invalid (numbers 3, 4, 7 and 8). For two other assumptions (numbers 2 and 6), there was not enough evidence to conclude one way or the other. The major constraints to goal achievement that were uncovered in the analysis of assumptions are (1) RDD does not have the skilled manpower resources necessary for an expanded program, and (2) support from relevant ministries necessary for integrated rural development remains questionable.

The evaluation team found a general willingness among interviewees to proceed to an expanded program if the project outputs were achieved, regardless of whether achievement of purpose can be substantiated. The purpose appears to be more an assumption between the outputs and goal rather than the essence of the project and a precondition for an expanded program. The essence of the project purpose appears to be a specific rate of expansion of RDD construction capacity.¹ The benefits to small farmers are assumed between the achieved rate of expansion and the expanded program. The benefits then reappear as a higher order objective meaning those benefits that accrue from the expanded program.

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| <h3>1. GOA Is Genuinely Committed to Rural Development</h3> |
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Findings

The Government of Afghanistan has a long history in the field of rural development. President Daoud, when Prime Minister in the years 1953 to 1963, initiated a rural development program that had as its objectives:

- To raise the productive output and income of the villagers by bringing to them the help of modern techniques in agriculture, sanitation and health, cooperatives, handicrafts and small-scale village industries, etc.
- To organize and establish mosques, schools, recreation centers, etc. to enrich the life of the people.

¹ The IPD program is more benefit oriented and so different in nature from the rural works program that the evaluation team recommends making these two programs separate projects (see p. 66).

- To create a spirit of self-help, initiative, leadership and cooperation among the villagers to provide a foundation for self-perpetuating economic and social progress.
- To organize a rural extension framework through which the associate ministries could pool their resources to help villagers to improve their living standards.¹

All people interviewed who are familiar with GOA history have commented on Daoud's personal involvement and commitment in rural development in these early years. The program ran into trouble due to the inability of the Rural Development Department to meet demands for expansion. Political pressure was high to implement the program in many provinces, and RDD did not have enough technically trained people to work in the many centers that were built. There was also conflict with the line ministries who were not pleased that RDD was undertaking activities that overlapped with ministry functions.² Daoud was no longer in office when the decision was taken to drop the rural development program in early 1969 and change the Rural Development Department to the Provincial Department with responsibility solely for rural works.

When Daoud came back into power in 1973 he reconstituted the Rural Development Department and put it in the Office of the Prime Ministry. According to RDD President Sediq, Daoud still takes a personal interest in RDD activities.³

The evaluation team has seen no information that would cast doubt on President Daoud's commitment to rural development.

One indicator of commitment to rural development would be the budget that RDD has received to undertake rural development. For its rural works projects, RDD does not appear to have any budget constraints (see page 49). The budget for the Department as a whole (including integrated rural development) is expected to increase from 62 million afis in 1976 (1355) to 260 million afis in 1982 (1361).⁴

¹ COA, Rural Development Department, "Integrated Approach to Rural (Agricultural) Development in Afghanistan: A Country Statement, Kabul, July, 1975, pp. 4-5.

² Information on the early RDD program was provided by President Sediq who indicated that the demise of the early program was a result of excessive pork-barreling. Interview with Sediq, May 10, 1976.

³ Sediq interview, May 10th.

⁴ Ibid.

Conclusions

The assumption appears to be valid with the question being more a matter of how to accomplish rural development (defining the role of RDD) rather than whether to do it.

Recommendation

The assumption should remain in the project design.

2. Accelerated Output Performance by RDD
Will Instill Sense of Accomplishment
To Fuel Further Acceleration and Improvement.

Findings

Last year RDD completed 28 rural works projects, This year it is expected to complete 70 out of more than 100 that it has planned. The expected increase in one year is 250 percent. The United Nations Development Programme is considering a proposal to provide RDD with a massive infusion of technical assistance that would boost RDD's capacity and further increase output. Other donors are also considering sizable inputs to RDD (See pp. A-92-93).

Conclusions

So far, we can see only a probable accelerated output performance and little in the way of a sense of accomplishment. This is attributable to (1) an accelerated output that, although on the verge of apparent realization, has not yet been realized, and (2) such a heavy foreign assistance input from foreign donors that there may be question as to who has been performing (RDD staff or the technical advisors?). This assumption cannot yet be validated.

Recommendations

The assumption should remain in the project design.

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| <p>3. Resources are Available to Make Full Support Goal Feasible</p> |
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Findings

Financial resources have not been a problem in RDD and do not now appear to pose a problem for the future considering the positive attitude of the Ministry of Finance and the proposals that have been made by foreign donors (see pp. A-92-93).

The major constraint is manpower resources within Afghanistan. There are not enough technically skilled Afghans to provide the manpower support for a rapidly expanding program. RDD can count on obtaining only about three new engineers each year. A program is now underway to recruit and train twelfth-grade graduates who would work as assistant technicians. With a division of labor and simplification of tasks the assistant technicians can make an effective contribution to RDD expansion.¹ However, there is a limit to the increase in the lower ranks without some increase in the higher ranks to provide proper supervisory support. Even at the technician level, RDD can expect to recruit only about 10 new people each year.² The same type of manpower constraint exists for rural development programs. Procurement of equipment represents a minor constraint as it takes one-and-one-half to two years for RDD to obtain delivery due to antiquated GOA procurement regulations and procedures. The United Nations has urged RDD to purchase equipment through an international procurement agency.³

Conclusions

This assumption is invalid due to serious manpower constraints.

¹ The plan for recruiting twelfth grade graduates as assistant technicians and then training them in very specific skills was developed by George Glaister, the UN Senior Advisor to RDD.

² This is Glaister's estimate as stated in his training plan for assistant technicians, "A proposal for the provision and training of Civil Engineering Technicians to carry out the programme in the 7 year plan 1355-1361."

³ Interview, Glaister, May 10, 1976

Recommendations

Future assistance programs should minimize dependence on highly skilled Afghan specialists and maximize use of those with a high school diploma and less. Paraprofessional manpower development should receive attention.

4. GOA Endorses Local Participation In Rural Project Decisions

Findings

The current RDD view on local participation is limited to villager requests for RDD assistance and village labor inputs in RDD projects. For rural works projects villagers do exchange views with RDD engineers prior to and during construction but this is on an informal *ad hoc* basis and not geared to maximize local participation in project decisions.¹ If RDD projects were solely dependent on voluntary village labor there would be greater local participation in decisionmaking, as the villagers would have to agree with RDD objectives before they would agree to contribute their labor. Although RDD official policy is to meet local unskilled labor needs with voluntary labor, exceptions have been made for foreign donor supported projects, and these now represent 95 percent of RDD projects.²

In RDD's ongoing integrated rural development experiment in Ghorband, village workers were sent into the villages to elicit requests from the local population for development projects. RDD has been flooded with more requests from Ghorband than it can possibly handle. Aside from these requests, the local population has not been approached to participate in decisionmaking on priorities or project strategies.³ So far, all decisionmaking in the project has been top-down. The

¹ The people will be consulted as to the conditions of the area such as the river's high water mark, the general course of the river during low water, the village preference for placement of a footbridge, the necessary amounts of water for irrigation.

² Memorandum from Barnett Chessin to Alan Roth, May 9, 1976.

³ Interview with Mr. Mathur, Indian Team Community Development Advisor to RDD, who developed the overall plan for development of Ghorband, on a field visit to Ghorband, May 16, 1976.

RDD Charter mentions local decisionmaking only to the degree of including a representative of people selected by the Governor to sit on the Rural Development Committee in each province.¹

In the Project Paper it is stated:

"No project will be considered unless the poor have been included in the decision processes, whether by formal and official participation or through informal and unofficial processes." (p. 34).

The project verifies whether the above criteria is met by using the request from the village plus an on-site assessment that villagers will be benefitting as sufficient proof. There is no assessment whether the requesters or those benefitting are the poor of the village.²

Conclusions

GOA officially endorses local participation in rural project decisions but in practice appears to be indifferent to such participation. The assumption is therefore judged invalid but because GOA does not appear to be adverse to such participation the invalidity would not endanger a rural development project that stipulated such participation.

¹ Article 17 of RDD Charter.

² Comment by Al Nehoda: "This is a perplexing problem and difficult to assess from any perspective. It is perhaps because the comparative basis for an assessment is obscured by our own income and consumption-oriented view of things.

"Although Afghanistan in western economic terms is among the poorest countries of the world, one does not find the abject and highly visible poverty encountered elsewhere. The discrepancy between rich and poor is most apparent in the cities. In many rural villages there is no visible means of verifying wealth. Utility and pragmatism govern every facet of life. Modesty is preferred to ostentation. There is no difference in the quality of the mud with which a poor man constructs his home and that with which a rich man constructs his. There is not a haute cuisine which the rich man enjoys, but the poor never tastes. Two car garages and TV antennas are nowhere to be seen. The rich villager does not wear Gucci boots and Cardin suits. He tends to minimize his wealth to outsiders rather than maximize it. To get at the real data in terms of wealth we must measure land, identify owners and count their cattle, and most importantly dig up mud floors to find the buried caches of 10 and 20 Afghani notes."

Recommendations

The assumptions should be changed to read, "GOA Actively Promotes Local Participation in Rural Development Project Decisions," which could be expected if a process-oriented rural development experiment proves effective.

5. RDD High Council and Council of Presidents Will Function on a Permanent Basis

Findings

The High Council has met twice since it was formed in June 1974. According to George Glaister, the UN Senior Advisor to RDD, the High Council has not been effective because there has been no advanced planning for the meetings. No agenda is set nor are briefing papers prepared and distributed to the members beforehand.¹ Glaister has made the following recommendations:

"In order to ensure the effective continuous functioning of the High Council it is essential that they should meet on a regular basis. It is also essential that they should be provided with effective Secretariat services which will provide the background data, analysis and working papers necessary to the decision-making and policy formulation process. A further requisite is up to date information on the progress of programme implementation and post-project appraisal to assess the effectiveness of ongoing programmes in achieving the policy aims. These services should be provided by the RDD through its function as Secretariat to the High Council.

"The agenda and working papers for these meetings should be sent to the members at least one month in advance to enable them to study them, particularly with regard to the effects of proposals on the policies and programmes of other ministries."²

¹ Interview with Glaister, May 10, 1976.

² Organization of the Rural Development Department, prepared by Glaister, this document has no title page to indicate official sanction, date, or UN origin, pp. 7-8.

RDD President Sediq told the evaluation team that he envisages the High Council meeting every six months.¹

The High Council can play an important role in integrated rural development by influencing the degree of cooperation of the ministries involved. The members of the High Council are:

- Deputy Prime Minister;
- Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation;
- Minister of Mines and Industries;
- Minister of Education;
- Minister of Public Health; and
- Minister of Planning.

The current RDD policy appears to be that RDD will take on the functions of the various ministries in the rural development regions rather than act as a coordinator of a rural development program in which the ministries actively participate.² Sediq explained that a major constraint is getting the necessary qualified people from the ministries to work in RDD. To effect his requests for ministerial cooperation Sediq said that he would go to the Prime Minister with his requests; once they were approved, all the other ministers would have to accept.³ This approach by-passes the High Council and is based on the assumption that Sediq can influence the Prime Minister to the degree that the Prime Minister would take action that would be contrary to the desires of his ministers. In a government in which the bureaucracy represents an important constituency, it appears unlikely that Sediq could have an effective program without coordinating his plans with the ministries.

The Council of Presidents has the following members:

- President, Agricultural Extension, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation;
- President, Primary Education, Ministry of Education;
- President, Illiteracy Campaign Department;

¹ Interview with Sediq, May 10, 1976.

² Article 5 of the RDD Charter.

³ Sediq interview, May 10th.

- President, Statistics;
- President, Public Health, Ministry of Public Health;
- President, Industries, Ministry of Mines and Industries;
- President, Agricultural Bank; and
- President, Planning, Ministry of Planning.

RDD reports that the Council of Presidents has been convened four times. The evaluation team asked the President of Agricultural Extension and the President of Public Health how often they have participated in Council meetings, and both replied that they have not been to any meetings. The President of Agricultural Extension said that he is not familiar with the Council of Presidents and he has not even met informally with RDD President Sedig. However, he has been recorded as present at Council meetings. This contradictory evidence materialized only at the end of the evaluation and no time remained to investigate further.

Conclusions

This assumption is judged to be valid. Both Councils will probably continue to convene periodically. The real problem is not whether they will continue to function but rather whether they can be effective in coordinating rural development activities. Much will depend on the initiative of RDD to give adequate secretariat support to the Councils and to use the Councils rather than try to bypass them by direct communication with the Prime Minister.

Recommendations

The assumption should be changed to read, "RDD High Council and Council of Presidents are Effective Forums for Coordination of Rural Development Activities." USAID should actively support the UN recommendations for RDD secretariat support to both Councils.

6. Tribal and Local Loyalties
Will Not Impede Implementation of RDD Charter

Findings

The key articles in the RDD Charter vulnerable to tribal and local loyalties would be the following:

Article 3: Aims of the Department

The basic aim of the department is development of all sectors of rural areas through the administration of economic and social programs for the public benefit and upgrading the standards of rural life at a stage where economic development of the villages depends on the people of the villages.

Article 4:

Persuasion of people for taking part in national life in general and for economic development in particular to narrow the existing economic and social gaps between city and village, is the final goal of the rural development department.

Article 15:

Share of people will be determined according to the financial strength of the people of areas where Rural Development Programs are to be carried out.

The evaluation team was not able to make an analysis of tribal and local loyalties of the involved RDD officials and other key involved government officials to determine to what degree these were influencing decisions on which tribal groups and which localities would benefit from RDD activities. It appeared that tribal and local loyalties were not playing an important role in decisions on where (which provinces) to locate RDD projects. The Pushtuns dominate the civil service but a clear attempt is now being made by RDD to recruit assistant technicians and village workers from local areas throughout the country. These staff members will be posted in their home regions.¹

¹ Interview with RDD President Sedig, April 29, 1976.

According to RDD President Sediq, no two senior staff members in RDD are from the same province. An exception would be Mr. Saqi, the RDD Vice President and Mr. Azimi, Chief of the technical division who are both from the same area. President Sediq wanted to promote Azimi as well to be a vice president but could not because he could not have two vice presidents from the same area.

Conclusions

While local and tribal loyalties may influence decisions within RDD, the influence appears to be minimal or at least consciously controlled in the RDD central office. It would be more difficult to make a judgment about decisionmaking in the provinces. With the little information that is available, it is not possible to judge whether this assumption is valid.

7. Inter-Ministerial Conflicts Will Not Impede Implementation of RDD Charter

Findings

In Article 3 of the RDD Charter RDD is given the task of:

Upgrading the standards of living, through expansion of developmental activities in fields of agriculture and irrigation, energy and industries, communications and transport, drinking water supply, education, health, environmental health, establishment of cooperative building of houses and provision of other socioeconomic public services....

These tasks, individually, fall under the responsibility of the various GOA ministries. Although the line ministries have staff posted in the provinces throughout the country, they have yet to develop any strong programs that reach out into the villages. Only the Department of Agricultural Extension has a large staff (2,850 extension workers) posted in the rural areas, but this staff is poorly trained and poorly equipped to be an effective force for development.¹

¹ Interview with A. Naik, President of the Department of Agricultural Extension, Ministry of Agriculture, May 17, 1976.

To expand developmental activities in the above mentioned fields, RDD can act as planning and coordinating unit for the ministries involved. According to RDD President Sediq:

"...it is proposed to make each concerned ministry fully responsible for the planning and execution of the programs concerning it even though they form a part of the integrated rural development program."¹

President Sediq is conscious of the problems that can ensue from a policy whereby RDD works without the ministries' cooperation:

"One of the factors which was responsible for comparatively slow progress in the community development project areas during the period 1954-69 was the lack of full coordination and cooperation between different concerned ministries of the Government... in order to overcome this difficulty, the Rural Development Department which is responsible for the integrated development of the rural areas, has been placed directly with the Prime Minister. It is hoped that with the authority and influence of the Prime Minister it will be possible to achieve full cooperation and coordination at the highest level."²

Yet the actions that RDD has taken to get its integrated rural development program started reflect quite a different approach than that stated in Sediq's policy paper. RDD has hired staff (some transferred from other ministries on a permanent basis) to undertake activities that clearly duplicate the functional responsibilities of the ministries that are supposed to be participating in the program. This participation appears to consist of giving up staff to RDD and approving of RDD duplicating the ministerial function in the regions identified for integrated rural development. RDD has apparently been able to obtain this participation because its demands have been very small. When asked by the evaluation team how RDD will be able to maintain such ministerial participation, Sediq replied that he will use the influence of the Prime Minister to pressure the ministries to cooperate.³ He also mentioned the power of the RDD High Council to influence the ministries, but the High Council is composed of the key ministers that would be involved in rural development and it is in the High Council that ministers may air their discontent.

¹ GOA, Rural Development Department, "Integrated Approach to Rural (Agricultural) Development in Afghanistan: A Country Statement," prepared by RDD President Sediq, July 1975. p. 15.

² Ibid.

³ Interview with President Sediq, April 29, 1976.

Conclusions

This assumption is not valid. RDD is heading on a collision course with the ministries. Their cooperation will diminish when they see RDD try to further expand into their functional areas. The ministries have a monopoly on the specialists that would be required for an expanded program and will not cede them to RDD if they feel threatened. RDD cannot succeed if it plans to do everything itself.

Recommendations

USAID should encourage RDD to abandon its plans to be the chief implementer in rural development, and rather to adopt the role of rural development planner and coordinator, to be the implementer in those areas that complement and do not threaten ministerial functions, and to actively encourage full participation by the ministries in rural development. USAID should provide an example by insisting on such an approach in USAID-supported rural development experiments. This assumption should remain in the project design and be monitored regularly.

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| <p>8. RDD Projects Other than FAR Funded Achieve Success Equal to FAR Projects</p> |
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Findings

RDD does not have an evaluation unit to assess achievement of completed projects.¹ USAID has plans to evaluate completed FAR projects but has not yet done so.

According to President Sediq, FAR projects are superior to other RDD projects because of the role of highly skilled USAID engineers in verifying the design, examining the project site and monitoring the construction. Their advice results in better design and better construction. Sediq explained that RDD does not have the necessary skills to do the same

¹ Interview with President Sediq, May 10, 1976.

quality work alone.¹ For Sediq, RDD would be achieving his expected objectives because his level of expectation is lower for non-FAR projects than for FAR projects.

The value of this assumption is that if RDD can perform well on more than just the Phase I FAR projects, it would be ready for an expanded FAR project (Phase II). If the success of FAR projects is due to the input of USAID engineers, then the key to a successful expanded program would be an expansion of the USAID engineers' inspection role. An evaluation conclusion is that there has not been enough USAID assistance to upgrade RDD capabilities and therefore it would be realistic to expect non-FAR projects to be inferior to FAR projects that did have the added advice of USAID engineers. The Project Paper states:

"...a proposed output of this project is to establish capabilities in planning..., evaluation, training, and road improvement construction; and, to improve the quality of engineering designs and project construction." (p. 19)

These capabilities cannot be tested effectively on projects that are under close USAID supervision where corrections are made every step of the way. A measure of success would be if RDD can apply its improved capabilities effectively on projects that are not constructed with direct USAID assistance. The Rural Works Project design contained no provision to measure success of projects that were not covered by FAR.

Conclusions

The assumption is invalid. That non-FAR projects are, by RDD admission, not of equal quality to FAR projects indicates that RDD is not ready to undertake an expanded FAR program.

Recommendations

The Rural Works Project should actively measure success of non-FAR projects using FAR criteria as an indicator of improved RDD capabilities, thereby expanding accountability of the project to cover more than just the FAR projects. The structural soundness of 30 percent of FAR projects (selected

¹ Comment by Al Nehoda: "RDD Evaluation Unit has a staff of two."

DAI Response: However, they have not to date undertaken any evaluations of completed projects.

randomly) completed during the Afghan year 1355 should be assessed before July 1977. The Project Paper proposed improved capabilities of RDD as an output but did not back this up with adequate inputs, output indicators and targets, and the means of verification. These should be included in the revised project design and this assumption would therefore be dropped from the project design.

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| <p>9. Other Donor Contributions to RDD Remain Stable or Increase</p> |
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Findings

RDD has had donor assistance in the past from a variety of sources. The World Food Program is providing the GOA with \$10.91 million worth of food assistance during the period December 1974 to June 1978.¹ Last year RDD used two-thirds of the total for that year and expects to increase the amount of food rations used on RDD projects by 33 percent in the current year.² There is talk of increasing the amount of WFP assistance by 250 percent for the next installment beginning in 1978. Before this is approved, an assessment of the current program is planned which may put dampers on any future WFP expansion.³

The Indian Government has provided two Community Development experts who are due to arrive soon.⁴

UNDP has contributed about \$1 million in assistance to RDD since 1970. The assistance included 240.5 man-months of expert services, training fellowships and \$91,000 worth of equipment.⁵ UNDP is now considering a new assistance program that totals \$3.1 million in technical and construction equipment assistance.⁶

¹ Request from the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan to the United Nations Development Programme for Technical Assistance, Training and Equipment in Support of the Rural Development Department (draft), March 1976, p. 17.

² Interview with President Sediq, May 10, 1976.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Interview with Mr. Mathur, Indian Community Development Advisor, May 16, 1976.

⁵ Op. cit., UNDP Request, p. 20.

⁶ Interview with George Glaister, May 10, 1976.

The German Voluntary Service has provided RDD with German volunteer engineers and this assistance is expected to continue.

The World Bank is now considering a loan to RDD of about \$2 million worth of equipment for minor irrigation systems and for implementing an experiment in integrated rural development.¹

Conclusions

All indications are that the assumption is valid.

Recommendations

USAID should coordinate RDD assistance with the other donors.

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| 10. AID Continues to Place Priority on Rural Development |
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Findings

The evaluation team found no information that would place doubt on this assumption.

Conclusions

The assumption is valid.

¹ Information supplied by Barnett Chessin.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

AN APPROACH TO DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

Donald R. Mickelwait
Development Alternatives, Inc.
June 8, 1976

I. THE SETTING

The Government of Afghanistan has embarked on a pilot program of integrated rural development in five districts (woliswalis) of five rural provinces. The program is most advanced in Ghorband District, Parwan Province, with half a dozen activities planned or ongoing. In the other provinces, however, there has been little activity, and in fact, rural development districts have not yet been chosen in two of the provinces.

Integrated rural development is being conducted by the Rural Development Department (RDD) under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office. RDD, with assistance from AID and other foreign donors, has enjoyed increasing success as a rural works agency. However, integrated rural development is a new responsibility and neither the department nor the foreign advisors to the department have settled upon an overall development strategy. One development program which has been suggested for Ghorband District is built around a particular approach to "community development." However, this community development

approach suffers from some familiar shortcomings: large staff, miniscule operating budget, numerous unprioritized activities conducted at the same time.

AID has offered to support rural works activities in Ghorband. However, by the time the mission is ready to launch a major district development campaign, Ghorband may no longer be able to serve as a model for the design and testing of a process of district development. Five new foreign advisors in agricultural fields and training are due to arrive soon (we assume to work in Ghorband), and their presence may make the introduction of a more systematic approach to district development impossible. Under these circumstances, AID would do well to select, in cooperation with RDD, another target district, and to prepare its plan and personnel support while the Government of Afghanistan recruits and offers basic training to the staff to be placed in the district.

The following pages provide an approach which could be utilized by AID, in support of the Rural Development Department, to test the most appropriate process for introducing change and modernization into rural Afghanistan, a process which would be carefully documented for use as the basis for a national development program.

II. DEFINING RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Concepts and Definitions

People are the subject of development. The development of rural people to the limit of their human capacities but within the constraints of their natural environment is an optimum goal for a government-sponsored program. Development is increasing the control of the rural population over their environment. Traditional societies accept droughts, pestilence, plague and feudalism as inevitable. Developed societies actively work to control natural or man-made disasters.

The development process requires a commitment of resources and an increased assumption of risk by the rural population. A government cannot by itself develop rural areas. It can, however, provide opportunities and knowledge so that people can develop themselves. Government resources and personnel are external to a rural society; local resources and leadership are internal. All development programs require a combination of the two in mutually cooperative endeavors. The most efficient development program seeks the maximum internal (local) commitment of resources for each dollar of external (government and/or foreign donor) resources. This is the principal of maximizing the local contribution to development.

The development process also requires basic changes in the attitudes and behavior of traditional people. There is a strong positive relationship between changes in attitudes and a commitment of resources by the local population. Some approaches to rural development generate more attitude and behavior change and resource commitment than others. The purpose of a pilot or experimental project is to determine which process brings the greatest local resource commitment and the most desirable attitude and behavior changes. This process of "local action" has been established as the surest route to development.

In this approach to development, the government's responsibility is to determine which productive investments, on the part of the rural population, will have the strongest impact on the rate of development change. External agents must:

- Develop a technology (opportunity for productive investment) which will benefit small farmers;
- Prove the technology under small farmer conditions;
- Demonstrate its potential benefits;
- Make certain the necessary inputs are available;
- Share the risk of changes if necessary; and
- Insure that whatever is grown/produced for sale can be transported and marketed.

All of these activities should be accomplished at least cost —

that is, with as few outside resources as possible.

The "productive investment" approach can be contrasted with the "felt needs" doctrine which requires merely that the government respond to village requests. While felt needs may be a helpful starting point to insure communication and cooperation between villagers and their government, it is not a useful basis for a development program:

There are (or soon will be, as a few felt needs are satisfied) more requests than any government can service; that a project is requested cannot be considered as the only criterion for selecting it; and

There is no reason to believe that the rural population itself knows the most productive investment opportunities available since this requires a knowledge of events and activities outside the village.

The government must undertake the difficult task of exploring opportunities for development change and of giving the villagers the opportunity to make such changes. It should be clear this does not mean forcing upon the rural population something it does not want, or designing a blueprint for development in Kabul. What it does mean is that the government researches and then demonstrates how changes can be beneficial to a rural population. It puts before them the ability to acquire the knowledge and/or inputs to make the changes, and then allows them freedom of choice -- self determination once the local population knows the options and benefits of development.

The "productiveness" of an investment made by the local population must be judged against certain indicators of development. For any district in Afghanistan, the following indicators of development can be standardized and measured:

- The annual increase (and rate of increase) in income of the population compared to the costs of the external resources;
- The increase in the ability of local communities to arrive at solutions to local problems;
- The increase in individual knowledge of the rural inhabitants in areas which affect their quality of life -- agriculture, water control, animal husbandry, health practices, nutrition, education, etc.; and
- The capacity of the project to sustain continued development progress after the external resources have been consumed.

Development activities should be selected which allow and encourage productive investments by the rural population and which bring the most "development," as measured by the four indicators given above, or by others which are important within a society, at the least cost in external resources.

III. THE COMPONENTS OF A DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Appropriate Technology

Most modern technology is not applicable to small farmers in Afghanistan. The high yielding wheat package being promoted by agricultural extensionists, by the Afghan Fertilizer Company

and by the Agricultural Development Bank is 5,300 Afs per hectare more expensive than traditional wheat production. This cost puts the package well beyond the capacity of a small farmer to acquire without outside assistance. Such a technology seeks the highest yields per hectare. A better technology would seek to maximize a small farmer's income at least cash cost; this may involve half the high yield output at one-tenth the cash cost.

Such low cost agricultural technology has not been developed for Afghanistan. To be effective, it must be tailored to the district, and to areas within the district. This calls for carefully conducted and recorded adaptive trials, whenever possible undertaken by small farmers themselves with supervision from project staff.¹

Agriculture is, of course, only one part of an integrated rural development program. Other areas also need improved, appropriate technology. Preventive health programs need simple low-cost packaging and delivery systems which will be understood and accepted by illiterate farmers. The same can be said for child care, non-formal education, nutrition, cottage industries, house construction, marketing knowledge, etc.

¹ A special problem in Afghanistan is the low-level equilibrium which prevails in wheat, the small farmer staple. Significantly higher output, in the absence of a stabilization program, will drive the price down so it will not cover the cost of inputs. This means that wheat output must be increased at low cost, so less land will be under wheat cultivation, leaving more for other crops. New appropriate technology for Afghanistan calls for new cropping packages. This obviously complicates the development of new technology for small farmers.

Any available technology which might be applicable for the rural population should be tested by the specialists at the district level. The refinement of technology and its packaging for extension is the major responsibility of the specialists assigned to or cooperating with the program.

Transferring Knowledge

Transferring knowledge can involve extension, non-formal education, training, outreach -- any system which can deliver knowledge of investment opportunities to the rural population. Half a dozen different techniques should be tested, including:

- Use of extension assistants (paraprofessionals) recruited from among small farmers;
- Use of group training in the village -- during the winter season -- of as many farmers from one village as will attend;
- Use of demonstration plots under risk-sharing contracts with village farmers;
- Use of one-subject campaigns, to flood an area with information and encouragement on one specific technology; and
- Adult education geared to practical use in increasing agricultural production.

Agricultural or Other Necessary Inputs

A new low-cost technology is of little value if the inputs are not available. The project should experiment with various methods of insuring the applicability of inputs (seeds, fertilizer, insecticides, etc.) and insuring access to inputs

(credit, savings and loan cooperatives, risk-sharing, etc.).

Methods may include:

- Capitalization of private entrepreneurs;
- Cooperatives purchase and sales;
- Project purchase and sales; and
- Government agency (non-project responsibility) purchase and sales.

Local Organization

The efficacy of development programs is multiplied when there is a local organization through which the outside specialists can work -- an organization controlled and led by villagers. This need not be a new formalized structure; traditional village meetings may serve this purpose. The project should encourage local cooperation, including local involvement in suggestions for new technologies, testing, and extension of the results. If a new organization must be formed (when traditional village structures are not useful vehicles for a development program), an important objective should be to encourage the emergence of change-oriented leaders through the expansion of the number and type of leadership roles in the community.

Information Systems

If a district development project is to be an experimental program designed to find a process by which rural development can be introduced on a national basis, a comprehensive

information system, established as an integral part of the project, is necessary. The information system will:

- Survey the district to determine communication patterns, major market towns, satellite villages, overall economic potential, etc.;
- Survey existing agricultural production practices to determine the "best" practices (including management) presently used in the local area;
- Monitor the arrival of project inputs, personnel, timing, etc.; and
- Establish control groups and treatment groups for different combinations of technology, knowledge transfer, input availability, etc.¹

IV. TIMING AND PRIORITIES OF A DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Building Upon Existing Technology and Practices

A staff needs to be recruited, given basic training and assigned to the district. It should consist of a project manager, specialists in agriculture animal care, preventive health, small industry, cooperatives, etc.² In addition,

¹ This procedure is called quasi experimental design, and is intended to determine which, among a number of approaches, brings the best results. For example, if a project wanted to test the five knowledge transfer methods listed on page 8, the district would need to be divided so that differences in response would be due to the methods used, and not to geography, ethnic or religious differences, economic activity, access to market centers, etc. In short, the district would need to be surveyed and divided into five areas which are as closely matched as possible.

² See the following section for a discussion of how the staff might be organized.

there is a need for village-level workers, such as those presently recruited and placed on the RDD district staff. The numbers to be selected will depend upon the size and locations of the population to be reached.

The first task should be to agree with the local population on some useful, income-generating idea(s) for the village workers to suggest and demonstrate. The specialists at the district level should begin immediately to assemble material on production alternatives and to formulate an adaptive research program. However, even when successful, this will not provide tested recommendations until well into the second year of the program. Much faster results can be obtained by conducting detailed farm-level surveys of agricultural techniques -- for example, of the small farmers who are acknowledged by their peers to be the area's best producers. If there is a continuum of inefficient to efficient farmers as evidenced by wide disparity in income and output utilizing approximately the same resource base, then the fastest development results can be achieved by bringing the below average traditional producer up to the level of the best producer in the area. Other studies have suggested that there is often as much difference between the output of inefficient and efficient small farmers as there is between the output of an efficient small farmer and research station results. This provides an immediate basis for improved local technology.

Data Collection and Analysis

Village-level workers must begin immediately to engage themselves in a data collection process, but this does not involve a standard "base line survey." Rather, the data to be collected should be specified in ever increasing detail -- first general area patterns and later, when these are understood, more detailed investigations leading to a set of specific farm management data on individual farmers. Early in the project, the data to be collected must be fed directly into decisionmaking on new approaches and alternatives for testing and extension. Later in the project, data collection must document which approaches work, how they can be improved and the process by which optimum district-level development programs can be conducted.

V. ORGANIZING FOR DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT

The pilot district development model used in Ghorband is "integrated," in the sense that all the specialists at the district level have been brought onto the staff of RDD. This includes agricultural extensionists, experimental farm workers, a health team, teachers, cooperative organizers, and others to be included as the program expands. For a variety of reasons this may not be an appropriate model for a national program. AID might be able to change this pattern by arguing that

a different model would be appropriate to test -- a model of coordination by RDD at the district level.

If RDD selected the project manager, and perhaps half a dozen other generalists who would help manage and coordinate the program, the other cooperating ministries might be willing to assign their people to the program without losing control of their staff or abdicating complete responsibility for district/village-level development to the RDD. While there is no easy way to stimulate inter-ministry cooperation, this approach may be more replicable than the integrated model presently being tested.

Foreign Technical Support

Three foreign specialists could provide the assistance required by the program. A senior development expert should be attached to RDD headquarters as an advisor to the government of Afghanistan on rural development. He should provide the general approach, and technical support in establishing quasi-experimental design. Two specialists should work from the district office -- an agriculturalist and an information specialist. Both should be supported by Afghanistan specialists who can multiply the impact of their assistance.

The Output of the Project

The district development pilot project would generate a process by which change and modernization could be introduced

into other rural areas of Afghanistan. The solutions found to be "best" in the particular district being developed with AID support may or may not be applicable to other rural areas. What will be transferable is the process -- the method by which technology is established, the means by which technology is transferred and the other successful components of a development program (risk-sharing, marketing, input deliveries, local organization, information systems). From a wide range of possibilities to be tested in the district chosen by AID, the project should narrow and refine the process so that a far more limited number of options may be tested in future districts. This will reduce the cost of future district development undertakings, as well as reduce the necessity for foreign advisory support. The Afghans who work with the AID-provided specialists should be more capable of undertaking a district development project on their own.

Through the services of the senior development specialist located in the Rural Development Department, the processes tested and found successful can be extended through RDD policy and implementation into other districts not directly affiliated with the AID program. This will speed the spread of new knowledge of the development process in rural Afghanistan, by providing a consistent conceptual basis for a national development program.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

COMMENTS ON THE DAI DRAFT REPORT

BY AL NEHODA

Unfortunately I have not been able to restrict my comments to a few succinct observations, since the DAI Evaluation Report is such a rich lode from which to pluck nuggets. I have discoursed at length in order to put down on paper a number of matters which I have found disconcerting. General comments on the report...follow.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

1. Given the time and circumstances, I think that the report contains a wealth of information and facts, gathered in one place, on the Rural Works Project and RDD as a whole. The fact that the draft is long and repetitive does not detract from its value. A final version of the report, however, will require condensation.
2. The report touches only indirectly on the basic lack of integration of the AID FAR program into RDD which is the ultimate reason that many of the original project goals could not be met.

The FAR program is a (super-) imposition upon the RDD structure, which neither can nor wants to absorb the endless paper work responsibilities of helping AID rationalize its inputs.

RDD does not need our socioeconomic analysis, our cost estimates, our cost accounting, or our inspection to function successfully as an agency of the GOA. It is unfortunate that these components are a prerequisite of our assistance.

"The donor is always right" attitude will permit us to revise our program, change our requirements, and make new demands on RDD -- up to a point. Before we reach that point, we must look at RDD's own structure, not with the attitude of reorganizing it to fit our needs, but with the idea of tailoring our needs to best fit the existing structure with the least possible amount of disruption.

3. To build institutions or to build public works, that is the question. Our present capabilities do not permit us to do both. We can only be partially successful in one area, given current administrative restraints and problems with FAR.

4. There is an implicit lack of trust throughout the project which has added a burdensome and tedious policing aspect to our roles. We are consequently not dealing with problems which arise in a general and objective sense, but in a nit-picking and subjective sense. The lack of trust has not helped facilitate communications between or within various levels of the project.

5. Given some serious philosophical doubts (as expressed by DAI, and as will be expressed hereafter) as to the efficacy of our present methods, we must proceed cautiously with other aspects of involvement in RDD (viz. MIS and IRD).

6. Beware! RDD at present probably has more foreign advisors than any other GOA organization of its size. More are coming soon! More are proposed! Each group is making its own individual and unique demands on the already overtaxed RDD system. RDD's inability to meet these demands will certainly lead to greater frustration -- or to a break.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

COMMENTS ON THE DAI DRAFT REPORT

BY BARNETT CHESSIN

The comments to follow to a large degree reflect comments in a recent memo to yourself¹ and Mr. Standish as well as those of Al Nehoda and Brent Gatch (see attached). Though we differ to a certain extent on aspects of the report -- and both Al and Brent have concentrated on areas of special interest (training, surveys, and engineering problems)-- there are areas of general agreement:

1. We agree that the Project Paper, as written, is inconsistent with both AID policy and Afghan reality. These inconsistencies have led to network CPIs which are impossible to attain, even assuming they are worth attaining. It is our opinion that the PP and resultant documents must be rewritten; in order to 1) establish more clearly AID's goals in the project, 2) to revise the network so that it accurately represents the state of the possible, and 3) allow AID to review our requirements in relation to RDD capabilities.

In line with the above we agree that much of the paperwork involved in FAR subproject approval not only is of questionable value for AID use, but has created difficulties for RDD, as they attempt to meet AID requirements. Socioeconomic surveys -- as presently constituted -- have little if any value, especially in terms of small water control subprojects. Cost estimates are of somewhat greater value; but with no final cost analysis to back them up, cannot be verified by either RDD or AID.

In effect then, rather than assist RDD in speeding up their construction process we have superimposed upon their system an alien burden, in the form of FAR. While attempting to meet ever increasing demands of the local populace and the GOA, RDD also has to deal with AID requirements. Thus, each new AID demand for some added piece of paper --

¹ Refers to Ernest J. Barbour, Chief/RD.

which RDD tries to provide -- tends to make more work for the organization we are supposed to be assisting. Noone will argue that records, etc., aren't necessary; but our chief aim should be to create only that paperwork which will be of value to RDD, when we no longer are providing assistance in this field. If FAR funding was taken away tomorrow, RDD would jettison virtually the entire system as too cumbersome, and of too little value. This leads to the conclusion that a thorough review of the FAR process is in order.

A further point which may be drawn from the DAI Report, is the burden placed upon project personnel and RDD by unrealistic goals written into the Project Paper and resultant documents. Assumption after assumption, in the PP, is written off -- by DAI -- as invalid, yet project results were continually tested against goals based on faulty assumptions. One has only to review recent monthly network reports to note the dilemma we are in. According to revised goals -- suggested in the DAI Report -- we are pretty much on schedule; according to AID-established goals, we are very definitely out of phase.

2. IRD and MIS: With regard to the IRD and MIS program, it seems apparent that DAI was answering perceived AID felt needs rather than the issues at hand. The stated AID desire for a national program has been translated -- in this report -- into an outline for spending more money at a faster rate. This may very well be what we want to hear, but is it what is really needed at this time?

IRD has suddenly become a vehicle for a contract team design operation, to be followed -- it is suggested -- by a contract Ph.D. to run the program. Though the IRD concept is a good one; with no experience behind us, we are already discussing high level advisors to RDD. With AID as much in the dark on this as RDD is, it would pay to go slowly, develop a single district project, and decide what to do next on the basis of that project's success or failure.

MIS follows the same pattern with even less justification. On the one hand, it is recommended that small water control projects be phased out because of doubts concerning their real value to the rural poor. They are to be replaced with minor irrigation systems, whose value seems to lie in the fact that socioeconomic surveys are more economic for projects on this larger scale. In neither case does the project provide more water for the farmer. Envisaged effort merely replaces temporary structures (repaired annually) with more permanent ones (repaired every five years?).

Though RDD does have a mandate to work on over 100 of these systems, it is our opinion that Armstrong-like, we take the first step and see what happens. Let us assist RDD in surveying, designing and constructing one MIS subproject, and, on the basis of the results, plan further assistance to the program, if it is warranted. An evaluation of this project should also take into account whether the RDD effort is counter-productive in the sense of replacing normal farmer effort, where such activities should not be replaced. It must always be remembered that RDD's job is to assist villagers when necessary, not to replace village effort. If the chief result of this program is the creation of a rural population waiting for things to be done for them, RDD -- with AID assistance -- will have put itself into an untenable position.

*Comment
effort
to show
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rather
than
'issue'
RDD*

3. Payment of labor: This seems to be an issue upon which we all can agree. In regard to those subprojects providing direct benefits to a small easily recognizable target population. Payment for labor and local commodities where such a direct relationship between people and sub-project cannot be established, should be continued. It is also our contention that, if possible, AID pressure the WFP program to follow the same pattern.

4. Planning Section: Though DAI has discussed the planning section, and the need for such a section to function properly in RDD, we feel that not enough emphasis has been put on its possible usefulness for RDD (and AID). Though the section has recently been designated as an official RDD section, RDD still sees this office as a liaison for AID only, and not as a truly functional RDD division. This is evidenced by the facts that there is no personnel stability in the section, and the continued dispersal of planning functions all over the RDD map (see Nehoda comments). We feel that AID must take a firm stand on personnel stabilization in this section -- including the return of Engineer Ismael to full-time duty -- so that the section can begin to show its possible value to RDD. Though RDD does not yet see the full utility of this section, we can use what leverage we have with RDD to stabilize the section; and then show them that it can be of real value beyond its role as a processor of FAR paperwork.

5. Staff turnover: The problem of staff turnover is of major importance to AID and the RW program. President Sediq's recent troubles have given us a good example of what can happen if one key man is missing for any length of time. Though DAI glosses over his importance to the program with the statement that others would be available to take his place "with sufficient political clout and rural development experience", there is no certainty that any of these people would be chosen, that a replacement would be willing to put in the sixteen hour days Sediq does, or would be as amenable to outside advice as he is.

Beyond this, it is obvious that RDD has only a thin veneer of solid leadership. Each section seems to function as the extension of one man in that section. Loss of a man to long-term training, or for other reasons, in many cases leaves a section devoid of talent, or forces another capable man to spread himself even more thinly to cover the gap. This is a reference point only, as the same may be said for any other GOA agency or ministry. The government currently offers few advantages for the young technocrat, and this forces good men to look outside of government for other opportunities.

6. Designs and FAR Demonstration Effect: Though DAI does not emphasize this point, it is clear that FAR subprojects are not yet serving their purpose as examples of "better" planning and construction techniques. This requires at least American engineering input at the preliminary design level. To date, not one subproject has been dealt with at this stage. In order to bring this about, it is our contention that three prerequisites must be met:

a) RD and CDE personnel must establish themselves at RDD on an almost full-time basis. In this we agree with the DAI recommendation, though without attempting to tie ourselves down to some arbitrary minimum or maximum of hours or days at RDD. The workload would determine time spent at RDD or AID.

b) Personnel assigned at RDD must have authority to make decisions which will be upheld by AID, within the framework of policy established by the AID project officer.

c) RDD must be brought around to an understanding that AID really does want to get involved at the preliminary design level, and does not wish to continue working on subprojects which were designed as much as four years ago, and to which RDD has committed itself before entering into discussions with AID. Once able to work under such conditions, the use of FAR subprojects as models can become a reality.

In conclusion, there are only a few other points to be raised concerning the report. It is clear that a great deal of effort went into the paper; and that the writers attempted to bring careful neutral analysis to a project which had already polarized sections of the AID Mission. Many of their conclusions bear out prior thinking, but tend to add weight to such conclusions, on the basis of the writers' analytical approach to the problems discussed. Even where disagreement remains, it can be handled, now, on a logical basis. All of this is to the good. What is lacking in this paper is an attempt to bring it down to a tight concise package. The

paper abounds in redundancies, and probably will stand up better in a fifty to sixty page revision. The paper as it now stands is padded too heavily, and this detracts from the points raised. Much of this can be attributed to the tight time frame they worked in; but it should be taken into account, when the final is made ready for AID/Kabul and AID/Washington.